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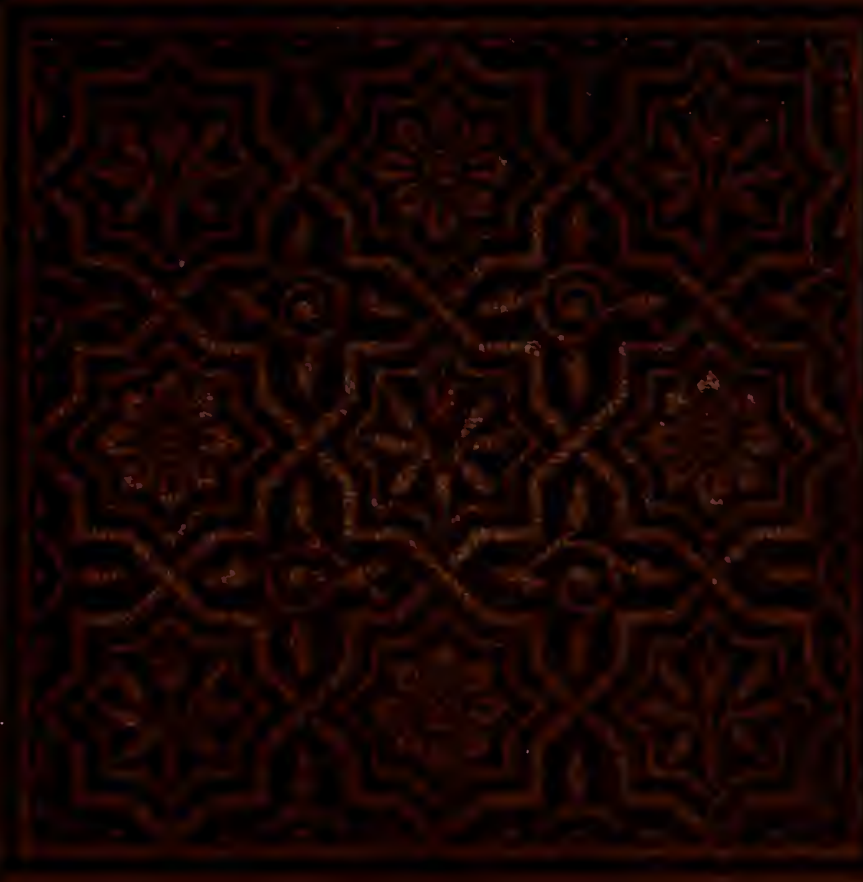
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A MONTH AT GASTEIN

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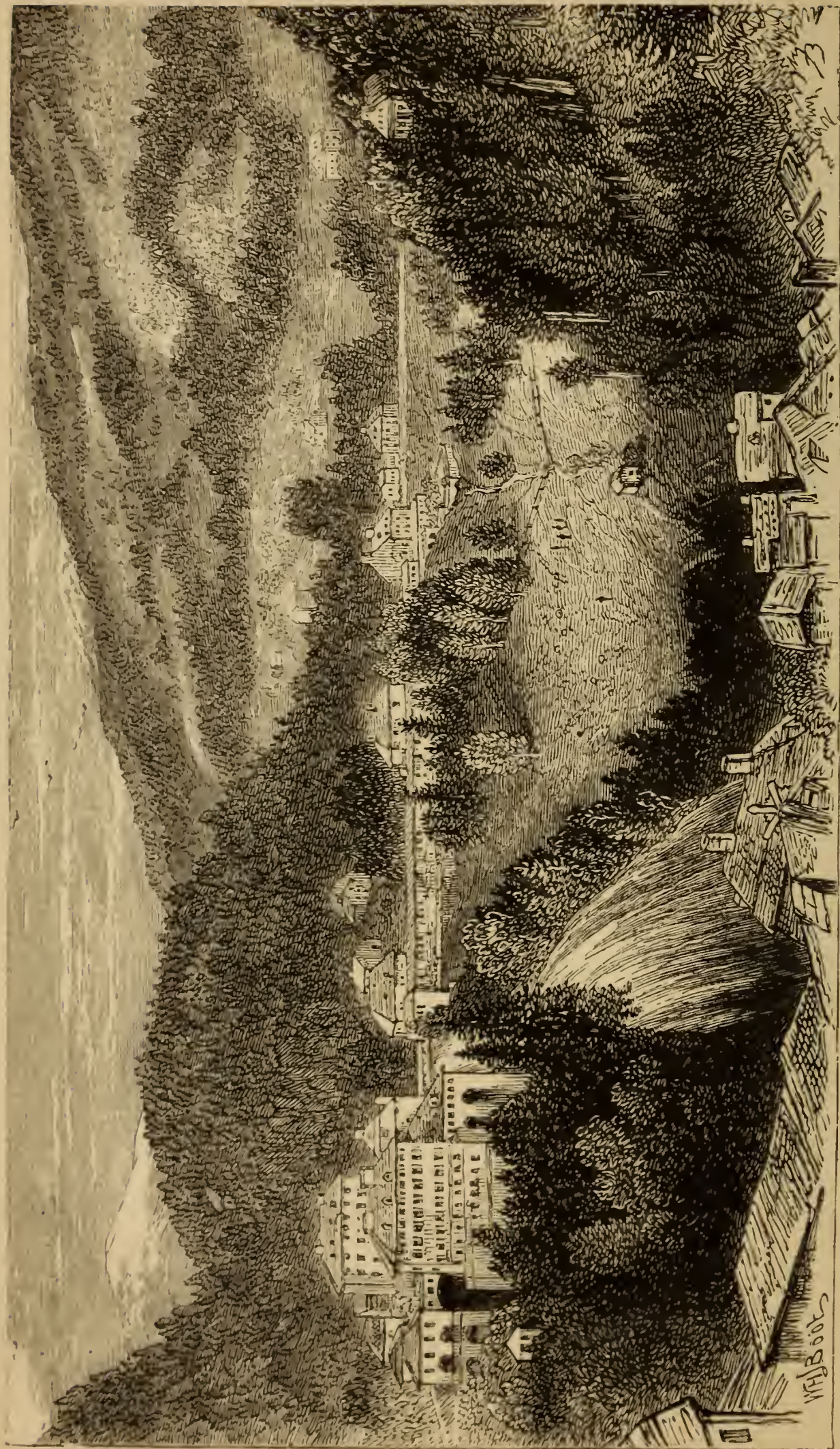
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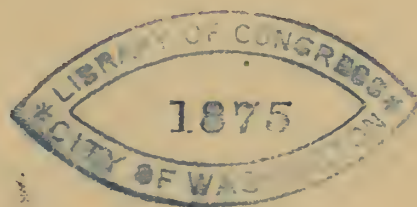
GASTEIN.

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A MONTH AT GASTEIN :

OR,

Footfalls in the Tyrol.

WITH TWENTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS.



LONDON:

R. BENTLEY & SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,

Publishers in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

✓
[1873]

DB 879
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✓
LONDON:

PRINTED BY J. OGDEN AND CO.

172, ST. JOHN STREET, E.C.

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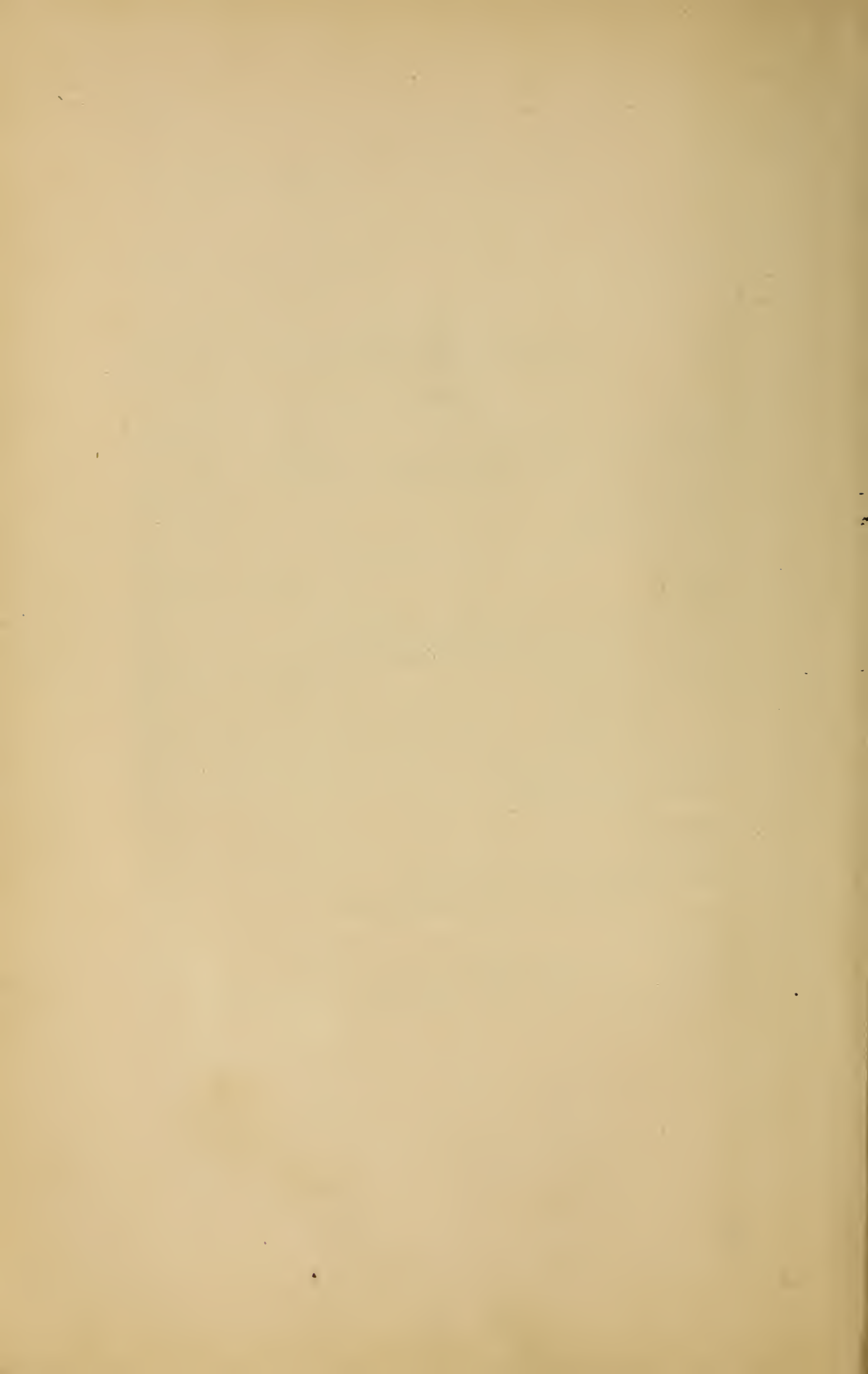


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A MONTH AT GASTEIN.

CHAPTER I.

ACROSS THE WATER.

“THE brain wants a holiday,” said the learned doctor I had consulted. “You cannot do better than go over to Gastein for three months. Or, if you would prefer it, take a trip to Alexandria and back in a P. and O. steamer.”

This was no doubt good advice; but to leave work behind me for so long a time seemed about as possible as to undertake a journey to the moon, or the conversion of the South-Sea Islanders. Still it has been said of old that where there's a will there is also a way: and though this proverb should of right belong to the gentler sex, to whom it is undoubtedly more applicable: it was not so very long after the counsel had been given, that by a train of

circumstances bearing upon the project, I was enabled to put it into execution.

So it happened that one morning I found myself, with a companion, on the point of starting from home and work, from familiar scenes and faces, and well-known haunts, into an uncertain fate and future. Good-byes were over: those good-byes that are always sad in this world, because a type of the last look, the last handshake, the last twining of the arms that comes to each at the closing scene of all. At such moments the still small voice is wont to make itself heard above the rattle of carriages and the roar of trains, as we wonder whether in the shadowy future it is recorded of us that we shall again look upon those loved faces from which we have just parted.

But after all there is something exhilarating in rapidity of motion; a sense of pleasure and of power in being whirled away at the rate of fifty miles an hour: scattering from the mind all those dull vapours that reach the heart: and so, whether we will or not, we yield ourselves up to the pure enjoyment of the hour: the sunshine and the quick changing scene.

On starting from Charing Cross the sky was gray and cold. In less than half an hour the clouds had rolled away, and we were in the full glory of an early spring morning at the beginning of May, 1870.

On nearing Dover, many anxious faces were thrust out of various compartments for a glimpse of the sea, which happily was calm, blue, and unruffled as a lake. Not the shade of a ripple, not the ghost of a swell, could be conjured up by the liveliest imagination. A general murmur of approbation that sounded like the swarming of bees; an access of colour to cheeks that had grown pale and paler yet; an increased interest in sundry packets of sandwiches, that is so English and so unpleasant; and we steamed on to the harbour.

After many inquiries, which resulted in as many differences of opinion; after many silent meditations; I had decided to cross over to Ostend, in preference to any other route: to take Bruges and Ghent on the way; Brussels, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, Coblenz, Munich, and Salzburg. And this plan was carried out, with, the exception of a slight alteration at Coblenz

to enable us to visit the wonderful, old-world town of Nuremberg.

When the train had stopped and dislodged its load of passengers, we went on board the Ostend boat, and my last remembrances of land were the frantic efforts of a porter endeavouring to call attention to the fact that there was due to him the sum of fourpence for the transport of luggage. But at that moment the rope slacked, the paddles turned, the boat parted from the side. As we steamed away the man threw himself into all the attitudes of rage and disappointment, and called upon the captain to put back in a manner that none but a hardened nature could have resisted.

The white cliffs, dazzling in the sunshine, gradually melted away in the distance; one object after another flickered and went out, until at length the English coast was nothing more than a recollection and a dream. Not that I indulged in any sentimental reveries upon the subject, after the fashion of poets and others on leaving their native shores; for in the first instance, though England was my country by what doctors would call the ties of

consanguinity, it was not so by the accident of birth ; and secondly, I had seen its cliffs disappear from sight far too often for the sensation to elevate me into rhapsodies, or plunge me into the depths of melancholy.

As the morning waned the water proved less calm ; a few of the passengers began to experience a little of those realities that undoubtedly knock all romance out of the most highly strung imaginations ; into many pairs of eyes there came that look which may be interpreted as a mute appeal to be cast into the sea. But Time sets right all these temporary derangements. Presently, Dunkerque was passed, afar off, its great tower, containing those wonderful chimes that challenge all others for sweetness, just visible. Then the flat coast of Belgium : and in due time the good ship was at anchor in the Ostend harbour.

How dreary and dismal the place looked, shut up and divested of its summer appendages, gay visitors included. How unattractive it seemed, even when fancy coloured it with the life and warmth of a full-flowing season. How the wind whistled down its bare, ill-paved

streets, blowing the sand into eyes and mouth, causing coats to be wrapped round more closely, collars put up, and caps drawn over eyes and ears. How comfortable to cross the bridge of the basin and disappear within shelter of the station !

In a few minutes the train started, and soon reached Bruges. It happened to be a Fête-day. The station was crowded with people of all classes ; town-folk and peasants in the various costumes of the nation : the latter class for the most part of so low a type of countenance as may be seldom seen ; more so than you will often meet with amongst the villages of France : many of the men repulsive both in feature and expression ; some of them almost less than human.

It was a relief to turn from them towards the town. The streets were decorated with flags and evergreens, after-signs of a procession ; one of those everlasting processions that are for ever taking place in Roman Catholic countries. Stretched across the streets from the upper windows of the houses were ropes holding flags and flowers, and bell-

shaped ornaments made of pieces of tobacco-pipe and red flannel; the ends finished off with bits of glass cut in diamonds, that jangled in the wind with an incessant but not unpleasant sound. Here and there stood an altar in process of demolition, nothing left of the grandeur that had been but the boards, carpets, and green branches. The streets were still crowded with gaily dressed men and women, promenading about arm in arm with an air that only foreigners know how to assume. Chattering, laughing, sauntering; now hailing a camarade and forcing him to link-in with them; now breaking out into the rampant chorus of some popular song. The quiet streets of Bruges were alive with noise and jollity, so that to get an impression of the town in its every-day aspect was impossible. It was the *Mois de Marie*, and the people were doing homage thereto in a manner that agreeably combined both the sacred and the profane.

The cathedral, externally a disappointment, was in its interior sufficiently imposing. The churches of Bruges and Ghent are of the same date and architecture, and bear a resemblance

to each other which makes them afterwards confusing to the memory. There were many pictures in the cathedral, but few, if any, worthy of notice. One small painting, representing the children of Israel picking up manna in the desert, was pointed out by the guide. "Look, monsieur," said he, "this poor man has dropped his money, and the others are helping him to gather it." It was impossible not to laugh at the interpretation; but as the man was no doubt better acquainted with sous and francs, which brought him some of the good things of this present life, it was hardly worth while to enlighten his ignorance, and disturb his convictions upon a matter that concerned only the past. The statues and images, the coarse artificial flowers, were more tawdry and gaudy; in worse taste than is often seen in a building of like pretension: contrasting—how strangely!—with the gravity and solemnity, the simple, stately beauty of our English cathedrals, just then uppermost in the mind. In the church of Nôtre Dame was a statue of the Virgin and Child, captured from a ship on its way to Britain, and

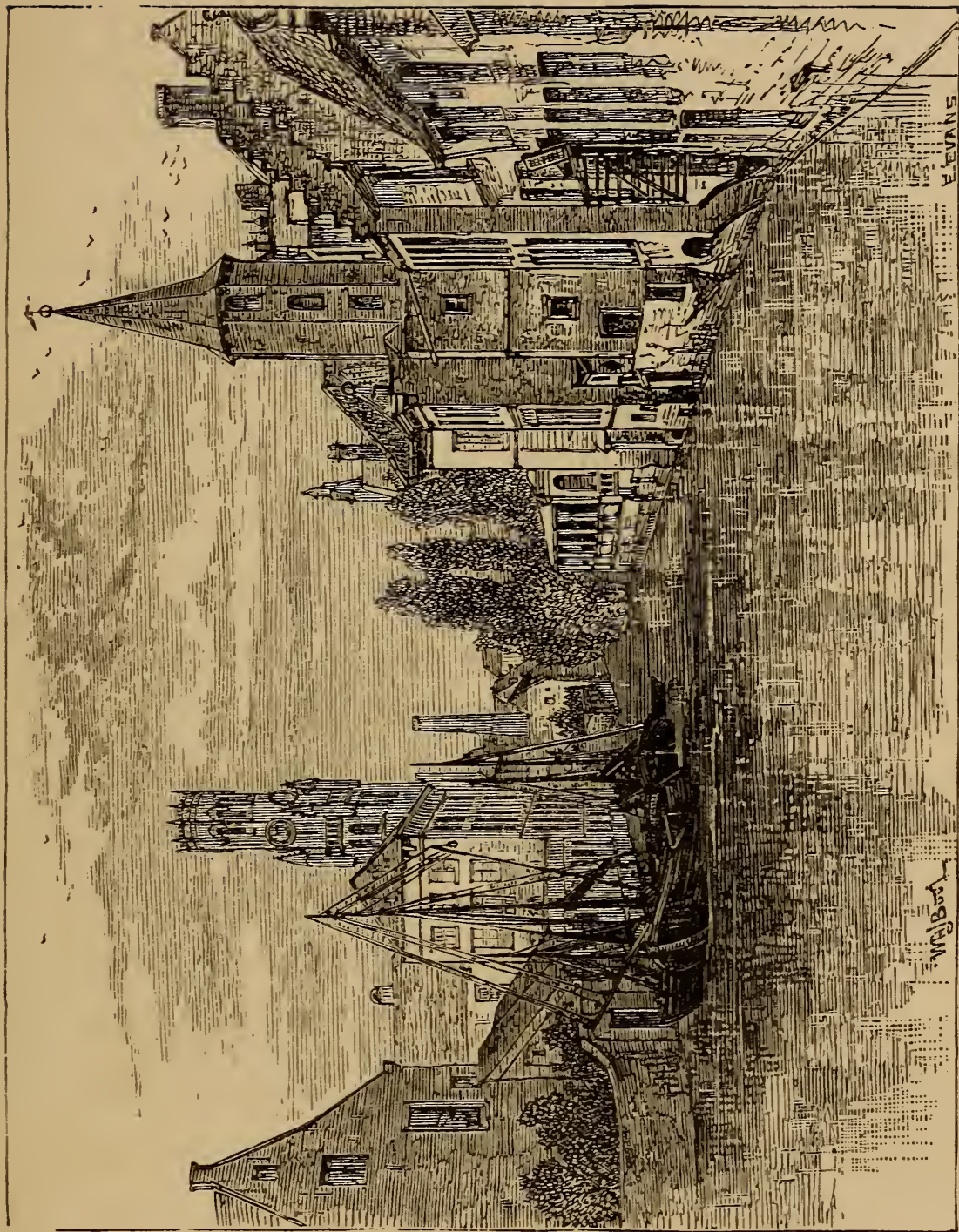
said to be the work of Michael Angelo. Whether so or not, it is beautifully executed. The tombs of the Duke of Burgundy and his daughter Mary, wife of the Emperor Maximilian and grandmother of Charles the Fifth, were remarkable, richly and most elaborately wrought in copper-gilt.

Threading the narrow streets we turned into the Grande Place, where in beauty and height uprose the Belfry: on either side was a wing, designed respectively for a fish market and cloth hall. The place was so crowded that it was impossible to mount to the top of the tower, which affords an extensive view of the surrounding plains. It was enough to look from the balcony upon the multitude, intent on pleasure-seeking. The Place was crammed with stalls and booths, after the manner of an English fair; but here all resemblance ceased. Such language and people and costumes are not to be seen in England. The women, with large black silk hoods thrown over their heads, looked ready for a fancy ball, in appearance far more picturesque than the men in their blue blouses. A yet greater

contrast existed in the ancient houses with their peaks and gables, carrying you back in imagination to the days of Old Spain.

The Chapelle du Saint Sang lay on the way back to the station : a small Gothic building of no pretension to beauty, so called because it professes to possess a few drops of our Saviour's blood, brought from Palestine by one of the Counts of Alsace. It is enclosed in a shrine of crystal and silver-gilt, in the form of a long, thick ruler. A priest seated within the altar-rails held up the shrine, which was being kissed by a continuous stream of people. Most of them seemed poor, and many were afflicted with grievous maladies : a sight which forbade lingering.

It was impossible to help admiring the canal, with its old houses built in days when people thought of beauty as well as usefulness ; its distant view of the belfry whose praise Longfellow has sung ; its rows of Linden trees in their first spring freshness, giving tone and softness to the scene : a refreshing picture of quiet life. Past all this we hurried to the station, now more crowded than



BRUGES CANAL, WITH PARTIAL VIEW OF BELFRY.

ever. Much talking in loud voices, some in the bad French so prevalent in Belgium; much kissing and adieu-ing with furious gesticulations, mingled with last messages and instructions. All was noise and confusion; and as the Ghent train slowly rolled in and slowly rolled out again, leisurely as a fat Dutchman rolls out the smoke from his mid-day pipe, we were not sorry to find ourselves clear of the whirl and uproar of a Bruges Fête-day.

CHAPTER II.

AMONGST THE NIGHTINGALES.

FROM Bruges to Ghent the country was flat and uninteresting, but the journey was soon over, and happily disclosed the old town in its ordinary, every-day repose. Ghent still possesses many traces of that dead-and-gone greatness that in the time of Charles V. made it perhaps the largest and most populous city in Europe. There are few signs of decay about, and it is yet one of the finest old towns to be seen. A not unpleasant place to live in, and a very inexpensive one. At each step there was something new to admire. First the cathedral and belfry: then a sudden turn opening on to the canal, all life and activity; its banks lined with houses more ancient, and therefore more interesting, than those of Bruges. Barges were being loaded; others, moving slowly on, towed by men; women in their floating

wash-houses beating linen, bringing down their arms to bear with a force that would not have shamed a blacksmith, laughing and chattering with each other as they worked.

St. Bavon, the cathedral, is a Gothic building, tolerably grand and imposing, rich in treasures of art and decoration. Rich especially in possessing the master-piece of the brothers Van Eyck—"The Adoration of the Lamb": one of the grandest pictures the early Flemish school has produced; not free from the hardness, but possessing little of the stiffness of that period.

In the centre of the picture the Lamb is seen, surrounded by adoring groups; martyrs bearing branches of palm; apostles and saints. The Fountain of the Water of Life runs clear as crystal, its transparency reflecting the glory around. Groves of the Tree of Life are visible; and, in the distance, the towers and bulwarks of the Holy City. In the foreground is grass of the richest green, bright with flowers painted with strange minuteness. For awhile, gazing at the picture, you felt translated from the noise and strife of the world;

and turned away, reluctant to leave so much beauty.

It would be impossible to note here, even by a passing remark, many of the interesting points of Ghent. Time and space, to be devoted to other matter, will admit but of a hurried tracing of the footsteps of this portion of the journey. In the Church of St. Michael, the first thing to arrest attention was the window at the extreme end of the choir, rich in colour and design, representing the Ascension. Two pictures, also worthy of praise: the Crucifixion, by Van Dyck; and the Finding of the Cross by the Empress Helena, by Paelink, an artist of the present century.

Each turn in the streets disclosed something to admire, or interesting from historical association. The *Marché au Vendredi* with its ancient houses, just as they must have looked in the days when Jacques van Artevelde headed an insurrection of the citizens of Ghent against their fellows: a fight pursued with such malignant fury that the Host was brought out by the priests before the enraged combatants, in the hope that they would respect the Presence and

disperse. But when men are mad with wine, or blood, or hate, they lose all control over themselves; and the Presence, disregarded, had to be withdrawn. When the citizens, united by friendship and yet closer ties, had quenched a little of their evil passions in a long, red draught, they retired; leaving upon the place fifteen hundred slain to bear witness to their sin and shame.

Van Artevelde, descended from a noble family of Flanders, was in consequence called the Brewer of Ghent, having enrolled as one of that respectable corporation, and for the vanity of popular favour made himself one of the people.

Here, too, later on, the Duke of Alva, that scourge of the Netherlands, lighted the fires of the Inquisition. This struck a fatal blow once and for ever at the commercial prosperity of Ghent. Thousands perished during the persecutions, and many of the best and bravest citizens were scattered over the world. In more prosperous times the old market-place was the scene of all the magnificence and wealth displayed at the inauguration of the Counts of Flanders.

Proceeding on to the Marché au Poissons, we passed under the gateway called the Oudeburg, a relic of the castle of the Counts of Flanders, founded, in 868, by Baldwin Bras de Fer. It was once occupied by Edward the Third, of England, and here John was born: for this reason, to go back to school-day remembrances, surnamed of Gaunt, or Gent, or, as more often spelt, Ghent; but amongst themselves as the world knows, Genf.

Edward the Third and Jacques Van Artevelde were closely allied, even by ties of friendship. At his suggestion Edward adopted the title of King of France, and quartered the fleurs-de-lys with the arms of England: an empty form not abandoned until the close of the last century.

This intimacy with the English king was ultimately the cause of Jacques' downfall. Edward had been some years back in his own land when he received an invitation from Van Artevelde, offering to make him Lord of Flanders, if he would come over. Edward, knowing Van Artevelde's popularity, accepted the invitation, and crossed the sea.

But Van Artevelde had gone too far, as men are wont to do who possess great power and responsibility. For once his good sense forsook him, and the error was fatal. The men of Ghent, incensed at the thought of being ruled by a foreigner, rebelled. They had also taken it into their heads that, during his administration, he had secretly sent large sums of money to England. The tide set in against Van Artevelde; the more fiercely, perhaps, for his former popularity.

Jacques rode out of the town to meet Edward, and, on his return, was amazed to find the streets crowded with inflamed faces—with men who shook their heads, and darted glances of revenge at him; the very men who, until now, had bowed to the ground before him, hastening to outstrip each other in obeying his commands, and observing his wishes. A low murmur of fierce anger, like the first undertones of a mighty storm, ran through the multitude.

Hardly knowing what to make of it, yet seeing that a strange change had come over the people; a conviction upon him that men who had not spared their own flesh and blood in

their fierce rage would as little hesitate to lift hand against their ruler; he hastened the pace of his horse, entered his house, and made fast the entrances. But what number of bars and bolts can resist an enraged mob? Artevelde, seeing how matters stood, addressed them from an upper window, trusting to calm their excitement, and win himself back into favour. But his voice, his entreaties, and his eloquence had lost their charm. Never again would those tones, that had so often stirred up thunders of admiration and applause, be listened to. He soon saw that his words were neither heard nor heeded, and with a feeling of despair he closed the window, and endeavoured to take refuge in a church at the back of his house. But it was useless; his star had set; his last moments were come. With a yell of revenge, almost resembling the cry of wild beasts, such a yell as only now and then has gone up from the earth, the doors were thrown down. The crowd rushed in, and, without mercy, without a moment's respite; without the shriving of priest, or the consolation of the last rites of the Church; poor Jacques, the intimate of kings, the friend and

favourite of the people, the man of power, of bravery, of success, was put to death by the very hands which had before sworn him allegiance.

One of the most ancient relics of this antiquated town is a ruin outside its walls, once the site of a Roman temple. Subsequently it became the monastery of St. Bavon. In a tower are seen Roman tiles and other remains, including a few skulls and bones that, perchance, would bear a great history, could we give them a name. Even the uninitiated eye may trace walls built in a style long since fallen into disuse. The only part at all perfect is a beautiful Romanesque Baptistry. It was worthy a visit, if only to hear the old concierge, still fresh and green, boast of his eighty-odd years; and how, when past the age allotted to man, he had, by sheer hard work and digging, brought to light the hidden repose of centuries.

At the opposite end of the town was the Béguinage; an institution that looks of the size and importance of a small town, composed of streets, squares, and a chapel; the whole enclosed by high walls, whose gates are closed at

night. It is occupied by a colony of nuns, or, more properly, Sisters, called *Béguines*, who pass their lives in tending the sick, making lace, and going out into the town—the humbler amongst them—to assist in household work. Within the gates it seemed quite a small distinct world, row after row, dull and deserted. But within the houses, all was life and activity on a quiet scale. In one small house, the sister was ironing linen, and it would have been difficult to find a face nicer-looking, more cheerful, good-tempered, and cleanly: the embodiment of peace and contentment. She seemed delighted to welcome visitors, and showed the treasures of her two rooms with pride and readiness. It is a famous institution, of which there are several branches in Belgium, enabling women to retire from the world; yet, as they are bound by no vow, permitting them to return to it at any moment, if they wish to do so. The poorest may enrol herself a member, certain of a refuge and an asylum.

A night and a day spent in Ghent, and we started for Brussels. All the world knows it; even those who have never been there have

heard it so often described, that they see it as in a dream. In the evening, we strolled out through the stiff, straight avenues of the park to the Palais de la Nation, and, turning downhill to the left, came upon the splendid church of Ste. Gudule, magnificent in the twilight. The lace shops were worthy their reputation, and doubtless have witnessed many a piece of extravagance since spoken of only in whispers.

Past these, we reached the Grande Place; one of the interesting spots of Europe. This, in truth, is Old Brussels. In front, in the deepening twilight, its slender spire cutting the clear background of the sky, was the Hôtel de Ville, exceeding in beauty all those exquisite buildings for which the Netherlands are famous, and of which the people are so proud. On all sides stood the ancient and richly decorated houses of the guilds; and, facing the Hôtel de Ville, most imposing of all, La Maison du Roi, in which Egmont and Horn passed the last night of their lives.

Early the next morning we left the noise and bustle of Brussels behind us. The journey to Aix-la-Chapelle was pleasant and refreshing, for

until now there had been little scenery to occupy the attention. First came the rich plain in gay spring dress. Then, on approaching Liège, hills gradually appeared, growing high and higher, until, winding through them, a glimpse was caught of the beautiful Meuse, which runs through some of the loveliest scenery of Northern Europe. Liège town lies in a valley, the hills falling back in a sort of amphitheatre, cut and crossed by numerous towers and spires.

Aix-la-Chapelle at last: and in the drive from the station to the Hôtel du Grand Monarque, the eye searched in vain for some signs of its antiquity. Though one of the oldest towns in Germany, nothing was visible beyond wide streets, and an unbroken line of modern houses, straight, stiff, and respectable, but guiltless of any more romantic idea than that of a prosperous watering-place.

In the evening, tired and cramped with the long journey, I walked over to Borcette, which is but a mile from Aix. It was a close, warm night, and Aix is situated in a hollow, surrounded by low hills. Very little breeze finds

its way into the town, which is, in consequence, so oppressive and relaxing, that I felt as if a month's stay there would render unnecessary all thoughts of the future and Gastein. Borcette, built at the foot of a hill, is still more confined than the mother city. The railway is carried across the narrow valley by an immense viaduct. Close beside the hotel the springs bubble up, a volume of steam rising into the air. The valley is small, but pretty, and thickly wooded. A narrow stream runs through it; and seats, for the use of invalids, were about in all directions. The groves echoed with the song of the nightingale.

The next morning we took one of the loveliest drives in the world. A continual ascent through groves of beeches, now in their greatest beauty, between which at intervals gleamed the rich plain below. Leaving the carriage at the top of the hill, and crossing to a break in the trees, a view opened to the sight not often surpassed. For miles stretched the rich and gently undulating plain, dotted over with towns and villages. In a slight depression, rather than valley, lay Aix, looking venerable enough now with its

cupolas and towers. In the midst of the city rose the Chapelle of Charlemagne, conspicuous by its dome and architecture, fashioned after the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. Above was the deep blue sky; and, overshadowing us, a hawthorn, throwing far and wide its delicious scent. Rejoicing in the spring and sunshine, the birds seemed to outvie each other in songs of praise. Every sense was soothed and gratified, and the mind wandered away in thought to ages far remote, when this rich and fertile plain was the scene of mighty combats; of power struggling against power, and light against darkness. From the time when the Romans first extended their arms northward, the land over which we now gazed had been the scene of all that is most interesting in history, and had held its part in all the great struggles of Europe.

That same day a far different scene rose before us. A few hours' journey brought us to Cologne, and the quickly passing time was chiefly spent in examining its wonderful treasure. As we entered the cathedral, singing was going on in the choir, and the effect of the far-

off voices was to throw the hearer into a species of trance. I sat down and listened, enraptured, to the grand tones of the organ, as they went surging and swelling through the mighty space : space that seemed almost too great and awful to have been raised by human hands. Gazing upwards at the enormous height, and onwards through the long vista of pillars and arches, I caught them sometimes singly and sometimes in clusters as they intersected each other ; here and there dyed by the coloured beams of light, as they struggled through the richly stained windows. All sense of the world was lost. When the organ ceased, and priests and choristers filed out, I walked through the forest-like building, and slowly paced its aisles. The distant choir looked more a vision than anything earthly, with its aisles and arches, its pillars and statues, all veiled in the softened, religious light of the ancient and beautiful windows.

Of the exterior, the east end is the gem, so grand, so beautiful in the light and shade caused by the numerous chapels, the flying buttresses and piers and pinnacles ; all so

delicately wrought that it was difficult to say which gave most delight: its fairy-like minuteness of detail, or its boldness and grandeur of outline—unlike the rest of the building, softened by that great beautifier as well as destroyer, Time. When the cathedral stands complete, with its triple spires of pierced work, it will indeed be one of the glories, not only of Germany, but of the whole world. A triumph of the mind of man, who, out of the rock of the wilderness has created a thing of beauty so rare and exquisite: a tribute of praise and adoration to the Maker of all beauty and all power.

The journey to Coblenz, at first not particularly striking, soon grew very beautiful. A rich, green plain, sprinkled with fruit-trees white and heavy with blossoms; avenues of lindens and horse-chestnuts stretching far away in the distance; so cool and calm that you longed to jump out and throw yourself under their shade, and dream away the hours. After passing Bonn the plain was quitted for the left bank of the Rhine, and the scene became grander and more wild. But the train whirled on so

quickly that it afforded scarcely more than a glimpse at places with which one would like to grow familiar. High up in the air, once we caught sight of an eagle, his outspread wings cutting the clear sky ; his flight majestic ; now as it were reposing upon the air, and now, with a calm, dignified sweep, soaring away beyond sight. When Coblenz was reached at last, we were not sorry that we made up our minds to take here two or three days' rest.

The view from the windows of the Hôtel du Géant was enough to lure one on to a far longer sojourn. Here you have the Rhine in one of its most beautiful and romantic spots. Before us flowed the calm, grand river, the castle and fortress of Ehrenbreitstein forming a background to the view. Later, we crossed the bridge of boats, and went up into the opposite heights. Darkness had come on, and the scene was enchanting. The pale beams of the moon were thrown upon the water, which caught their brightness and carried it rippling and sparkling far down the stream. You might fancy that a mermaid had passed that way, her passage lighted by millions of tiny lamps

that burnt on to do her homage. Hundreds of nightingales filled the air with a flow of melody, sufficiently distant not to disturb the feeling of repose that crept over the spirit, as it gazed in silence upon the unearthly scene. It would have been easy to have passed the whole night there in contemplation, unbroken by thought of sleep.

Later on, indeed, with windows open to the river, the song of the birds came floating across the wide stream, so distinct and incessant, yet so beautiful in softness and melody, that sleep was charmed away. It was an utterly delightful sensation: listening to the bird-music; to an occasional splash upon the water from some midnight oar; to feel that between this and England there was the difference not of space merely, but of a world; that it was Wonderland; Rhineland; the land of poetry and beauty and romance; of much that is great and noble; glorious in nature, eminent in man, powerful in genius.

Once I went out to the balcony. The stars were flashing like diamonds, the moon was still visible, bright and silvery in the dark blue sky.

Everything was wrapped in night. The fortress was sunk in gloom, save for the light and shade thrown out by the moonlight. The heights and the sky seemed to have melted into one ; not a soul was abroad. On all lay the stillness of sleep and repose ; the death of nature. But, wafted across the stream in wave after wave of melody, floating, throbbing, soft and beautiful as the song of an Eastern dream, came the notes sweet, clear, and unceasing of the nightingales.

CHAPTER III.

IN CONVENT WALLS.

THE next morning we started off in search of Moselweiss. Some few months before, a young English lady, not twenty years of age, whom I had known intimately, had embraced the Roman Catholic religion, and gone over there to a convent. I had heard nothing of her since her entrance, and determined to find her out. Thinking it within the bounds of probability that she would eventually take the veil, I wanted to see in what sort of place her future life would be passed.

Moselweiss was about half an hour's walk from Coblenz, a walk of extreme beauty. Nearing the village, a large building, to which an immense wing was being added, announced the Convent des Sœurs de la Visitation. In a few moments the door-bell went echoing through corridors with a sharp, unpleasant clang, that

in itself seemed full of tones of mystery and rigour. In answer there came forth one of the humbler sisters, dressed as a nun ; short and plain, but with a pleasant, good-natured face. Nevertheless it bore an expression of stupidity, heightened perhaps at sight of a member of the male sex, when at most her imagination had anticipated no more formidable arrival than the butter-woman, or a sick peasant. Quickly she ushered us into a narrow passage made for the accommodation of visitors ; on one side a window, with a hard, long bench beneath it ; opposite, a large grating, protecting closely-fastened shutters.

After waiting about ten minutes, there was a movement behind the shutters, a rustling of soft gowns, a murmur of voices, the bolts were undrawn, the immense shutters swung back in double folds upon their hinges, and A—— appeared, accompanied by a nun. It would be impossible to forget the change in the girl's face when I first caught sight of her ; stiff, immovable, and nunlike : only the dress wanting to complete the transformation.

Her astonishment at seeing one whom she

supposed far away was unbounded. For a moment she could not utter a word; then the frigid expression fell away like a child's house of cards, before the pleasure of beholding a home face. A glad exclamation followed, but the grating prevented a hand-clasp.

“Qui est-ce, mon enfant?” asked the soft voice of the nun, in the high-bred tones of her native French.

“Ma sœur, c'est l'ami de mon frère.”

“Alors, mon enfant, je ne veux pas vous faire montrer comme ça. Je vous ferai passer.”

I was surprised that they allowed her to come round; still more, to remain alone with a heretic; and yet more, when, presently, she craved permission to go out and spend the day with us, it was granted.

The walk back to Coblenz was full of old times; and as the day wore on we touched upon the convent and convent life. A——, reserved upon all points, would say very little; but declared she had never been so happy as now. The nuns were everything kind, pleasant, and delightful.

“ People,” she said, “ have a most erroneous idea of a convent life. They think it very much now as it used to be in the days of the old monks——”

“ Who crossed themselves when they met in passages, dropped their eyes, and repeated for ever ‘ Memento mori.’ ”

“ It is not so bad as that,” she returned. “ But the world imagines that a nun’s whole life is passed in gravity and penance ; in a round of rigid religious observances ; that a laugh is never heard within the convent walls, and recreation is unknown.”

“ Well ? ”

“ Nothing can be more mistaken. We, in our hours of leisure, are as merry as you in the world : and ours, I believe, is the more satisfying happiness. When at work we laugh and talk amongst ourselves, and do not sit, as you fancy, as if undergoing a perpetual sentence of death. We are perfectly at rest ; we have done with the world ; its cares and worry ; its heart-burnings and jealousies ; its frivolities and love of pleasure.”

“ But are you not sent into the world to

enjoy it in moderation ? To fight and struggle with whatever is wrong ; to gain strength out of weakness ? If you conquer merely by avoiding ; by shutting yourself out of the way of temptation and the world ; you have gained no victory. You are guilty of cowardice ; of weakness greater than that of a worldly nature ; guilty, I believe, of a deliberate wrong."

" Oh no," she replied. " That is the way you narrow-minded people argue. You cannot discern our glorious sacrifice in renouncing the world, its pomps and pleasures. Our hearts, after all, are but human. Is it not a beautiful thing to crush our hearts, and give up all for the sake of Heaven ?"

" You were never sent into the world to live apart from it. Your idea is romantic ; the result of youth. The highest and noblest lot is to live in the world, amongst its attractions and temptations, and not to become their slave. But why do you say so emphatically ' we ' ? Why speak as if you were already a nun ? Surely you would never separate yourself for ever from your people, and take the veil ?"

She would give no direct answer.

“I should never do it,” she replied at length, “without being quite certain of myself, and of my future happiness.”

That afternoon, we went up the Rhine in the steamer as far as Stolzenfels, and the short journey was enlivened by a large party, half English, half Americans, who talked with a grand air in loud tones, and gave remarkable opinions upon surrounding objects and the society of the world in general. They improved, too, upon the ordinary rules of grammar, and introduced exceptions which happily exist not elsewhere. At Stolzenfels we landed, and they went on, their laughter and loud tones floating backwards in the wake of the vessel.

As we walked up the winding road ; between banks covered with rare wild flowers ; amidst trees bright with early spring ; gazed into the ravine, and upwards at the ancient castle proudly and grimly overlooking the waters of the river ; it was an easy task to fancy ourselves taking part in one of the many legends of the Rhine, transported back a

few centuries in the world's history and age.

Having spent some time here, we were quietly rowed back to Coblenz. After dinner (it was Friday, by the way, and A—— religiously eat maigre) we drove in the cool of the evening to the convent. As A—— disappeared through the small doorway, a presentiment told me that she would one day pass through it never to come out again.

Time has proved its truth. War broke out, and A—— returned for a time to England and the gaieties of the world. When peace was restored she went back to her convent; and not long since, she and her sister took the black veil, and vows that can never be recalled.

Do they ever regret it? ever cast back a longing thought to the world and the friends they have renounced? ever wish themselves once more amidst its pleasures and attractions? They do not say. But it seems impossible that an act so unnatural on the part of young girls of twenty, full of health and life and spirit, should not some day be repented; when the

glow of romance has subsided into calm, matter of fact reality.

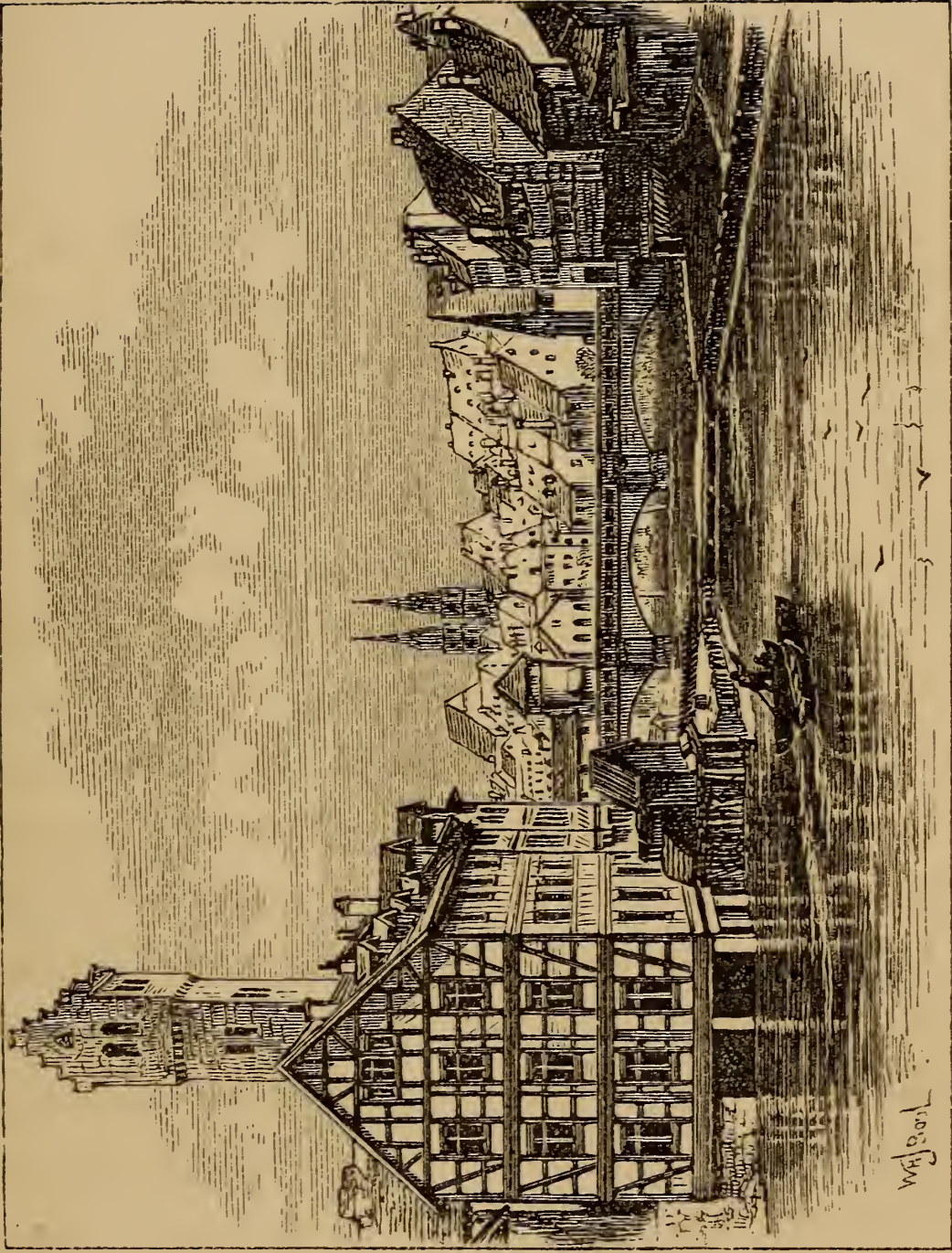
Driving back to the hotel in the quiet of the evening,—twilight gradually falling upon the world and veiling it—in tracing out A——'s history, it was impossible to avoid observing how strangely our destinies seem marked out for us ; and how, frequently, by taking matters into our own hands, we turn aside our lives.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE SHADOWS OF THE PAST.

WE had intended to go from Coblenz to Munich, but changed our plans to visit that wonderful old place, Nuremberg.

Who has not heard of Nuremberg, so famous for centuries? Famous, too, from many different causes—like a universal genius, able to shine in everything. At various periods of its history the most important manufacturing town in Germany; the birthplace of inventions; the cradle of the fine arts, the home of German freedom. With Nuremberg's name will ever be linked that of Albert Dürer; each gaining dignity from the other. Nuremberg was just the place to give light to a great painter, though in those days some three or four hundred years younger than it is now. Yet its narrow, straggling, uneven streets, its quaint, gabled houses, could never have had a childhood or youth.



NUREMBERG.

Certainly they look old enough to satisfy the most exacting lover of antiquity.

The hotel was a large, rambling building, with staircases and passages and corridors in the most unexpected, out-of-the-way places. After the luxury of Coblenz it seemed rude and comfortless; yet who would have had it different? From the windows of a room, large, but otherwise guiltless of comfort, we looked down upon a scene, before which, in spite of fatigue and hunger, I remained long riveted. No longer the beauty of scenery; of winding rivers and green trees; of fruit blossoms, and cloud-capped mountains. These had given place to the work of man, but of generations long since gone to their rest. How hard to realise that human ingenuity had produced the surrounding buildings! It was the record, the silent monument, of a past age; testifying to the things and people that had been; showing them up in all the dignity of their mind, the simplicity of their nature.

How easy to imagine Albert Dürer threading these streets more than three centuries ago, their still dignity so in accordance with that of

his own temperament. The place once seen, it seems possible to trace a subtle link of connection between it and his pictures. His old house appears just as he left it, and is now inhabited by a band of artists who reverentially treat the old place for his sake. Looking down upon it, you might fancy you saw his large, sweet face, with the soft, gentle eyes peering at you from out the dark shadows. In the cemetery, just outside the town, stands his grave—which, nevertheless, it is thought does not actually hold his body—and the grave of his dearest friend (not his wife, alas, for poor Dürer); and though they lie not side by side, yet they are near enough, doubtless, to find each other in that great day, when they shall awake for ever from their long, silent slumber.

He sleeps calmly; he has forgotten the world; he rests from his labours and his domestic troubles; but the world is faithful to him, and remembers him as well now as in the days of his youth and strength. The little woman in the picture gallery, as she swung back the shutters of paintings by other and less celebrated men, talked of him long and

fast. She seemed as proud of him as if he had been her own ancestor, and bewailed the fate that debarred her from keeping guard over his pictures. But Nuremberg, that gave light to these riches, possesses them not. For the world perhaps it is as well, since comparatively few people visit the ancient town.

The next day, Sunday, the whole place seemed to have turned out for a holiday, dressed in its best: and many a strange contrast might have been drawn between the aged streets and houses, and the smart caps and coats and dresses of a more modern fashion. It was impossible to help fancying that the old town in which these people lived, the quaint buildings, must have some influence upon their minds and character. Scarcely possible to grow up with a nature altogether hard, prosy, and unromantic. Yet no great men come from it now; the glory of the town has passed away. But the beauty and grandeur of its antiquity; the strange impression of a past world, a dead age, that comes over you as you walk its streets, nothing can take away, and perhaps no other town can give.

Time passes quickly when counted by days and hours. Soon, therefore, we had bidden farewell to Nuremberg, and were once more en voyage, with faces turned towards Munich.

That gay, lively, charming capital! The home of artists. That has not only nursed them, but cherishes and hands down to fame and posterity so many of their best works. A long drive in the clattering, springless omnibus landed us, about ten o'clock at night, at the Hôtel des Quatre Saisons, a large, comfortable building, conducted, omnibus excepted, on excellent principles.

Early the next morning, I was awakened by the tramp of soldiers marching past, and a splendid band, that caused me to spring up, even at the first moment of consciousness, with a feeling of being far away from England. But how different was the town at a subsequent visit! Now all was quiet and peaceful; people were going about their work as if nothing would ever occur to interrupt the even current of their lives; no foreshadowing of evil was creeping into their hearts; no silent messenger whispering to the young maidens, wives,

mothers, that ere long many of them would mourn a lover, husband, or child. But the change was coming; at that second, later, visit the decree had gone forth. Then everything was hurry, and excitement, and emotion. The streets re-echoed with the tramp of soldiers, as regiment after regiment passed through them on the way to battle. Those who remember how the Bavarian troops distinguished themselves; how they were invariably put in front of the fight, and thrown into all positions of danger—unfair as it seems, and reads—will realize how vast a number of those brave men never returned to the hearts and homes made desolate for ever. The town was all excitement. The faces of men and women had grown long; eyes were red with weeping; hearts heavy and oppressed; steps uncertain, here rapid and nervous, there slow and lingering; the result of a trouble too great to bear. All speech, save on the one absorbing topic, had been abandoned.

But at this, our first, visit to Munich none of these rumours and signs of preparations had yet appeared; the storm-clouds then gathering,

though not so very far below the horizon, were still unsuspected.

The town itself seemed one of the most charming places in the world. It might well be called a city of palaces, so large were its buildings, so handsome, so white, so dignified, and so numerous. The town appeared in a chronic state of perfection, the streets so clean and fresh looking you could scarcely fancy them inhabited. It may be that I was unconsciously influenced by the contrast with Nuremberg; but I have seldom been impressed with any town as I was with a first view of Munich.

It could boast but little in the matter of churches; but there are so many wonderful churches all over the world, that this is easily forgiven in a place abounding with other attractions. The theatre was small but pretty, and the performance good, considering that none of the singers were of any distinction. The opera, that first night, was "Le Domino Noir," given in German, and given well. The acting, as is generally the case in France and Germany, was superior to anything we see even in our best houses. More lively and imagina-

tive, less heavy than the English, the Germans and French possess a faculty of throwing themselves into their characters, of losing their own individuality in the part they are playing, seldom attained by us. In Paris a play is almost always worth seeing, no matter what it is, or where performed; it is not possible to say as much for London.

But the picture galleries contain the great treasures of Munich—the old and new Pinacothek. Here the old masters repose in all their glory. Italian, French, Dutch, and German Schools: some of the best works of Rubens, Rembrandt, Albert Dürer, Holbein, the brothers Van Eyck—those men who first invented painting on canvas—Vandyke, Murillo, Titian, Raphael, Tintoretto, and many others of world-wide fame. Days and weeks would pass quickly in the study of these chefs-d'œuvre. In the works of Andreas Van der Werff, the collection was especially rich, one small side cabinet being entirely given up to him: and their soft, quiet, finished beauty was one of the charms of the whole collection.

The Glyptothek contained also a rare col-

lection of sculpture: one of its most remarkable pieces a statue of Ceres holding a torch, searching for Proserpine, the head, shoulder and arms of white marble, the flowing drapery of black. The beauty of the small classical head, with its perfect features, the extreme beauty of the whole figure, would be difficult to describe. Another was a sculptured figure of Apollo in white marble, by Thorwaldsen.

After a few days' rest—rest from travel though rest in no other sense—we reluctantly bid farewell to Munich and its attractions.

Salzburg was to be the next and final destination before Gastein, and one hot, sunny morning we turned our faces thitherward. The journey, most picturesque and interesting, lying amongst views differing from any yet encountered, lasted some hours, almost constantly in sight of the great Alpine range of mountains to the south. When Salzburg was at length reached, we found ourselves amidst a perfect intoxication of gorgeous landscape.

It was indeed wonderful. The view from the windows of the Hôtel de l'Europe could never be forgotten.

Below, at some little distance, lay the town, its houses shining out white and hot in the glaring sunshine. Towering on the summit of a rock was the castle, once the residence of the archbishops, but long since dismantled of its glories of state and splendour. Around, stretched the mountains, pile after pile, one above another, the dazzling snow a strange, unearthly sight in the midst of heat so intense. Through the town, with the speed of a torrent, cleaving its way between the chain of Noric Alps, rushed the Salza; sweeping on past hills and vales, wooded slopes and abrupt precipices, until at length, joining the Danube, it mingled its waters with those of that ancient river.

The intense azure blue of the sky could not very easily be seen in England: and the mountains caught the reflection and tinged the snow with a colour that was not of earth. Small silver threads and streams of snow here and there ran down the slopes, until, within a certain distance of the level, they melted and disappeared. Later on, the church bells rang out; the air caught up the reverberation; and amidst the surrounding beauty, the mysterious,

fast-falling twilight, it required no vivid fancy to believe yourself listening to a chorus of far-off, unseen spirits, guardians of the wondrous scene.

This place gave birth to Mozart. Here he lived his first years, drinking-in influences that filled his heart and mind with those unutterable melodies. A strange unison must have existed between his spirit and his home. His love of the beautiful gloried and delighted in the perfection of nature around him : the dignity of the snow-capped, everlasting hills ; always there, always the same ; always cold, grand, silent, stern, unbending ; but lovable and soul-stirring ; true and faithful. He need never doubt how he should meet them ; how they would greet him. No frown or unkind word ; no impatience or anger. More constant ever than man's friendship.

Mozart was born in a large, old-fashioned house in the most unromantic part of the town ; a narrow, crowded street, shut out from all beauties. After a time his parents moved to a more open spot ; and from the windows of the new home, the child could look out upon the

hills and wonder : could hold commune with them in the language that no doubt was even then speaking within him. In after-life he must have cast back many a thought to this early home ; have roamed in spirit, in the dark night-hours, over those wonderful mountains ; down the seething torrent, its rushing sound so much music to his ears : setting all to melody, until in a wild, incomprehensible rapture he would fall asleep, and dream of a paradise and beings not of this world.

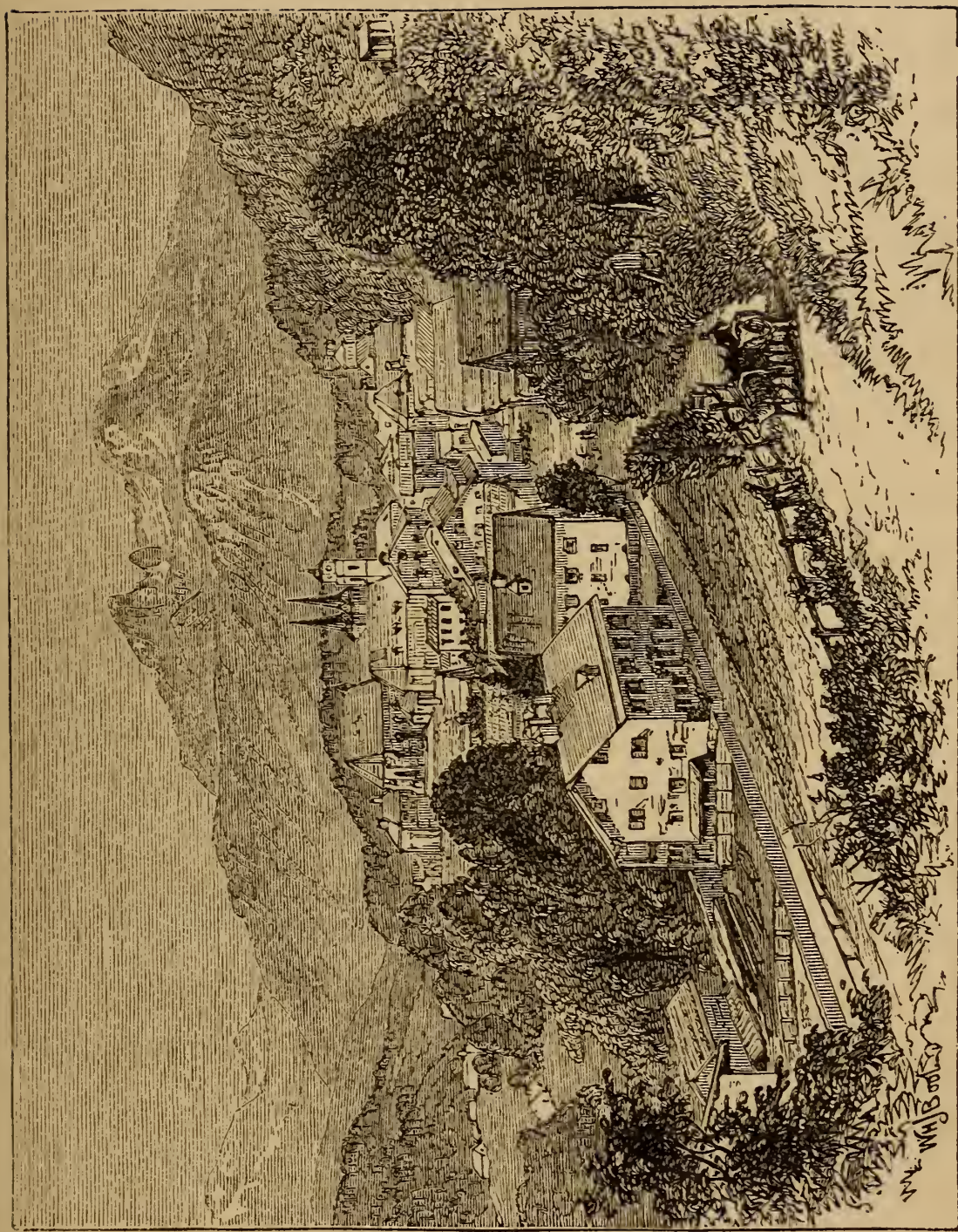
For miles round Salzburg the scenery is beyond description. A drive of three hours through mountains ; wooded slopes, here and there dotted with white cottages ; at intervals a small village, an inn, or a tollbar ; to your left hand a shallow, gurgling, swift-flowing river ; now passing gently through pastures gorgeous with their multitude of wild flowers ; now leaping down and gathering fresh force for its course : such a drive brings you to Berchtesgaden and the wonderful Königsee.

A handful of houses clustering amongst the mountains, whose snow-crowned peaks and summits towered on every side : the houses

hiding amidst trees like a shy coquette; the river flowing through in a winding, capricious manner: this, and a nameless charm that must be seen and experienced and cannot be written, made of Berchtesgaden an earthly paradise, if one there be.

Beyond lay the Königsee, one of the most notable lakes of Germany. On all sides the mountains rose so precipitously that in many places there was not space for a footpath. So deep was the lake that here and there the water was almost black as ink: and involuntarily, you shuddered as the boat cut through the dead-like quietness, where the cold mountain sides were reflected upon the surface: a feeling more subtle than any felt on a raging sea.

The dark fir-trees, growing on the mountains gave them a deep, melancholy appearance, that corresponded with the sad, green colour of the water. Here and there, far up, standing like a fly upon a wall, was perched a goat, lost in the great stretch. A short row, and the lake opened in its extent; the snow mountains at the end rose in majesty and splendour, their



BERCHTESGADEN.

dazzling whiteness contrasting with and somewhat relieving the solemn-looking firs on either side. On the left of the lake was a waterfall of rugged and romantic beauty; on the right the pilgrimage chapel of St. Bartholomew with its small cupola domes, creating a wonder as to how in the world, or why, it had got there.

The drive back to Salzburg, when the sun had long passed the meridian and the heat had grown less unbearable, was in the highest degree enjoyable. Yet its beauties were less palpable than in the morning. The chief points in the scenery opened out less forcibly; many of them lay behind: and the mind, full of the impression of the wild grandeur of the lake, was more inclined to dwell upon and retain what it had seen, than to be looking out for new sensations. As in everything else, there are times when the mind grows weary of the beauties of nature, and until it has taken rest the senses cease to charm.

The Hôtel de l'Europe was reached at last. And unfortunately for those etherealized mortals who consider that the gratified desires of the spiritual should be food sufficient for the

more earthly elements of our nature, I must confess to returning in a desperate state of hunger. The excellent and luxurious cuisine had justice done to it as full and faithful as if I had not for many hours been revelling in all those beauties of creation that tend to elevate and refine mankind.

CHAPTER V.

A NOISY WATCHMAN.

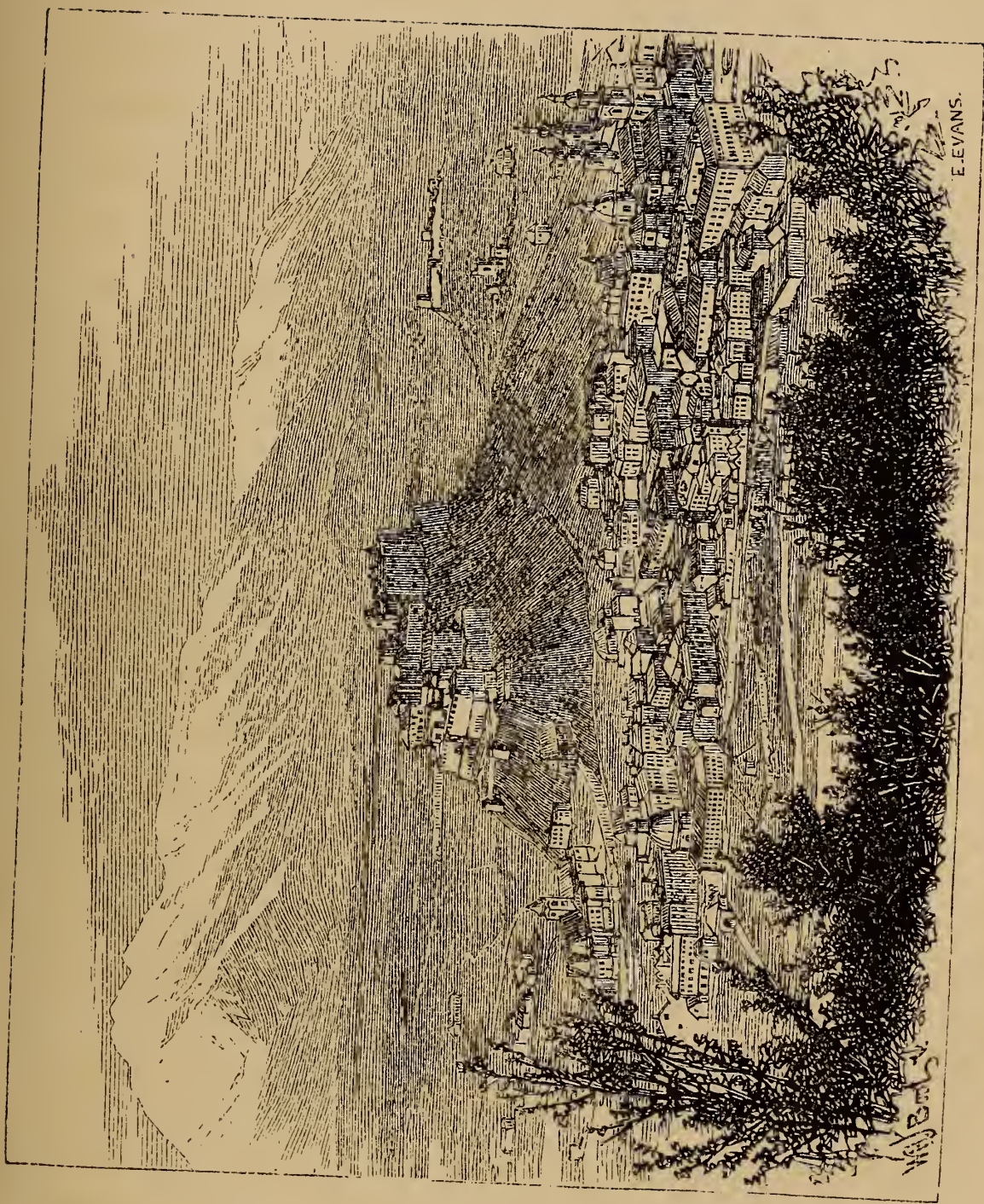
THERE is no railway between Salzburg and Gastein. The only mode of communication is by diligence ; or by hiring a private carriage, which opens and closes at pleasure of the traveller.

This diligence was a lumbering machine after the fashion of its kind ; but the horses were decent, and moved at a tolerably quick pace. Yet it was impossible thus to journey without losing a great part of the surrounding scenery ; an idea not to be entertained for a moment, except by those who, like the guard and coachman, have traversed the route so frequently, that familiarity has robbed it of its charm.

For one person, where economy is an object, the diligence is the quickest and best means of reaching Gastein. A carriage cannot do it under two days, without relays of post horses ; and even then the fatigue is considerable. But

if two or more are travelling, it is almost as inexpensive to hire a carriage. The latter holds four; so that an amicable parti-carré may travel for the price of one. In many parts of the Tyrol, where there is no railroad, this is a consideration not to be lost sight of. Another consideration is, the importance of travelling with the smallest possible amount of luggage. This the Germans never forget. Sometimes I have charitably concluded that they must have brought with them at least a change of linen; but from the extent of their baggage it would have puzzled a conjuror to discover where it was stowed away. The English more frequently find their unwieldy trunks (not small in number by way of balance) have cost them in the end far more than they cost themselves: and certainly infinitely more trouble and anxiety.

Herr Jung, the landlord of the Hôtel de l'Europe, strongly advocated a carriage in preference to the diligen. Indeed, he went beyond the boundary of mere counsel, and agreeably settled the matter by saying that it was the only course to be adopted, and that he



SALZBURG.

would make it his business to select an easy conveyance and a good coachman. We were loth to leave a place so beautiful, and could scarcely have done so, but that it was in our plan to return to it again. It would be impossible to speak too highly of the hotel, of its comfort and good management; and of its unrivalled site.

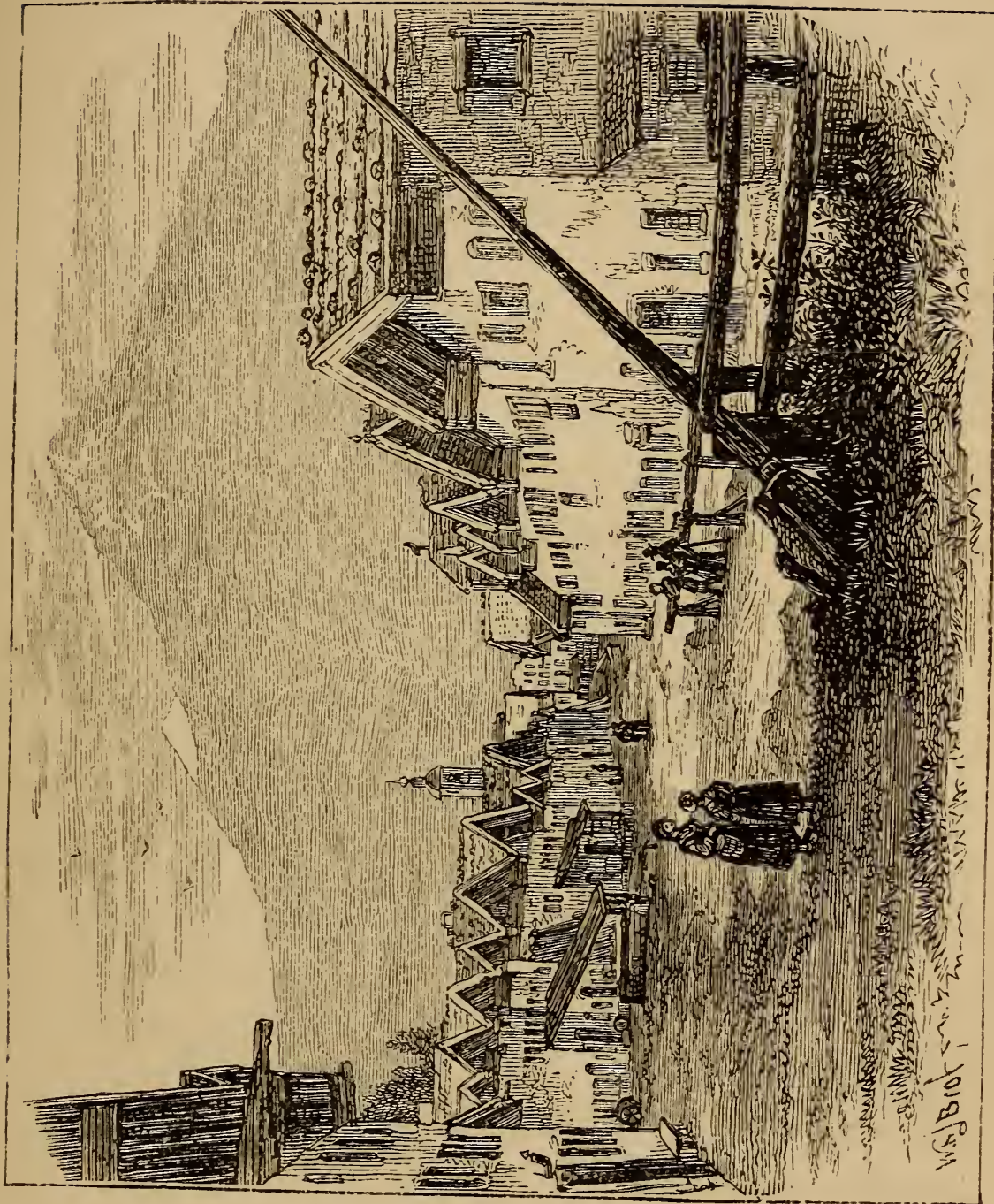
Afternoon had set in when we started for Gastein in an open carriage, at the quiet pace of a pair of horses. Golling, that evening's destination, ought to be reached about seven o'clock: and I was anxious to get there before nightfall, for the purpose of visiting a famous waterfall in the neighbourhood.

In time we reached the village of Hallein, at the foot of the Dürrenberg, noted for its salt mines. I had entered a salt mine at Berchtesgaden, and felt no desire to repeat the experiment. In most respects it was disappointing, fulfilling none of those visions of lofty caverns, and stately pillars, and grand arches, blazing and flashing like diamonds, that somehow float in the mind in connection with the subject. Explored also by many

ladies: who surely would not be bold enough to venture did they but know what lay before them. Sliding down a very long and steep incline of wood, astride on the back of a miner, at a breathless rate, is one of the inevitable and not very feminine feats to be performed during the inspection.

Without halting at Hallein, we drove on through scenery growing each moment more wild and grand. Crossing the Salza and ascending the right bank, the valley narrowed; and soon we perceived rising the wild mass of the Tännengebirge, a long, uninterrupted chain of mountain. The next village was Kuckl; and between six and seven o'clock Golling was entered, and that day's journey came to an end.

The quaintest village ever seen: consisting of one long, winding street; a crude, unworldly aspect about the houses, which all resembled each other, and gave to the place a primitive appearance that reminded you of nothing so much as a Quaker-settlement. Every house was whitewashed, and looked almost dazzlingly clean. Each roof was pointed and over-



GOLLING.

hanging; large stones were placed here and there as a protection against the fall of winter snows. The effect of this uniformity was pleasing to a stranger, because the architecture—to apply a ridiculously grand word to the most humble of buildings—was so marked and uncommon: but the stiffness of the whole was less so. At the entrance of the village stood a toll-bar: a long pole with a heap of stones at one end, that balanced the pole upwards when the rope holding it was unfastened. By this means at night the keeper is enabled, without getting up, in answer to the horn carried by most of the post-boys, to slacken the rope and raise the bar.

Not less primitive than the village was the inn; and if the rooms were not luxuriously furnished, they were large and clean. But it was not so primitive in all respects: the landlord knew how to charge. Taking all things into consideration and comparison, it was on the whole the dearest place we stayed at in Germany: dearer than the best hotels in Munich (which are not dear); certainly more advanced than the Hôtel de l'Europe. Vexed,

and a little indignant at the bill, I determined that Golling should not be the halting place on the return journey. But our best laid plans, like many of our good intentions, often come to nought; and on that subsequent journey, it so happened that, spite of foregone resolutions, it was found impracticable to stop anywhere else.

The village is surrounded by mountains that from their peculiar form look higher than they are in reality: on one side they are sufficiently distant to admit of a rich and fertile plain. Whilst tea was brewing at the inn, I strolled out into the village for a moment, and into the church, which had no beauty to recommend it; and on the exterior were several representations in relief from the New Testament, let into the wall, rather revolting for their ugliness. The graveyard was in perfect order, many of the simple stones bearing inscriptions from the Book of Wisdom. One text seemed especially a favourite:

“But the souls of the righteous are in the Hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seem to die; and their departure is taken for misery, and

their going from us to be utter destruction : but they are in peace."

Somehow, to find the well-known text in this primitive, out-of-the-way world ; so far from home, from all familiar objects ; brought to the mind more forcibly than anything else could have done, the fact that distant as nations are separated from each other, opposite as they may be in habits, manners, customs, thoughts, still they possess the one great link that binds them together: the same faith, the same hope ; even as they must all pass through the one same dark portal of death. Alike in the great, eternal Creed.

Over all there was an air of quiet and repose, an atmosphere of sanctity that made itself felt if it could not be seen, proclaiming with what reverence these people regard their religion.

Tea quickly despatched, we started off for the waterfall, a young blacksmith's boy acting as guide.

He was a lad of about sixteen, but looked at least two or three years younger. His expression at a first glance seemed stupid, bor-

dering on deficiency; but as we went on, and he began to talk, his face lighted up with intelligence.

“ Have you a father or mother ? ” I asked.

“ No,” was the reply, “ both dead.”

“ Any brothers and sisters ? ”

“ Two sisters and one brother. All out at work and doing for themselves.”

“ Are they older than you ? ”

Yes. He was the youngest of all.

“ What work do you do ? ”

The question was unneeded, for the boy's complexion sufficiently betrayed his occupation; but it followed naturally.

“ Schmidt,” said he, with such a short, crisp, abrupt sound, that it was impossible to restrain an equally short, crisp laugh.

“ What made you choose so grimy a trade ? ”

“ I like it,” he replied. “ It is warm in winter. One of my sisters works in the fields : that would not suit me. The other is a servant.”

“ Do you earn wages ? ”

“ Not yet, Herr. Next year I shall begin.”

“ How do you manage about clothes ? ”

“ I sometimes have them given to me. Some-

times a little money, too. My sisters help me as far as they can; they can't do much."

"Do you like apples?" I asked, after we had walked a little way in silence.

"Oh ja!" And this time the gleam of intelligence was unmistakable.

I had taken one from the tea-table as a curiosity, the biggest and ruddiest of its kind ever seen. Here was a good opportunity of disposing of it. The boy turned it critically round with both hands, smelt it, and finally crammed it into his pocket with a smile of satisfaction.

"I do like apples," said he, "and this is a beauty."

"Why don't you eat it?"

He shook his head. "By and by. Not now. We are coming to the waterfall."

We had reached the foot of the mountain, and could hear the water dashing over the stony rocks. A short, steep ascent, and we came to it. Dusk was growing apace, and much of the beauty of the scene was fast disappearing with daylight. But, on the other hand, there lay that mysterious atmosphere of

holiness and repose over nature that always accompanies the twilight. We clambered up to a small wooden bridge thrown across the chasm, whence could be obtained the best view of the dashing fall, both above and below. The spray came over in a shower; but who cared, when so spell-bound? It was a sight not to be lost, though the volume of water was less great than rumour had led one to anticipate. Its situation was completely romantic. The solitude at this darkening hour seemed excessive, striking the senses with awe. No sound save the roaring of the waters, no sign of human habitation but the mill below; of which the stream in its course worked the wheel.

Not until darkness had quite crept over all did we turn back. As we descended the path towards a picturesque hut, built of rough logs of wood, the mill door opened, and a woman with a lighted candle issued forth. We all reached the hut together, and then observed that it contained photographs, stones, bits of wood, and other curiosities for sale. Even here, at this hour of the night, when one might have thought to escape under cover of the

darkness, the inevitable bargain had to be made. So after due examination of the relics, we were set free of the toils with a view of the waterfall and a fossil stone. The candle was extinguished, and the solitary but civil and pleasant woman walked back to her mill. As the door closed behind her with a click, I wondered whether she had any one to keep her company in that dull desert-like habitation.

It was getting late when we reached the inn. Over and above rewarding the lad for his trouble, we gave him a brand-new piece of silver money, with strict injunctions never to change it, but to keep it in memory of the evening. He faithfully promised, though his anxious inquiry as to its value was not to be received without suspicion. One would almost dread now to inquire how long it remained unbroken. Finally we parted: he probably to cultivate closer relations with his apple; we to our rooms and the luxury of unconsciousness.

But if for a moment I had indulged in the vain hope of a good night's rest, I was destined to be terribly undeceived. Whether the

Gollingers are inclined to deafness; or whether their hard, daily work blesses them at night with sleep so sound that nothing will awaken them; cannot be told. Never, certes, was sleepless night passed in a more complete wilderness of noise.

To begin with, once an hour a watchman patrolled the village, singing a verse of a hymn in one of the most unearthly voices ever heard. This seemed to irritate a company of dogs to so great an extent that they kept up an incessant barking and howling: and no one could wonder at their vigorous protest. One noise after another kept on in rapid succession until two o'clock. Then the diligence from Gastein came rattling over the stones of the street with a noise like thunder. The coachman cracked his whip as only the Tyrolese know how to do it, and the horrible machine with its two pair of cattle, dashed up to a standstill at the very door of the inn. A loud bell pealed through the empty spaces of the straggling building, and in a short time, which yet seemed an age, doors were unbarred and swung back, and there followed a clatter as of

the changing of horses. The conductor and a passenger jumped out of the interior ; and in about twenty minutes the whole concern dashed off again towards Gastein. The coachman had evidently treated his whip to beer as well as himself, for the cracks echoed among the hills like a volley of rifles ; the horses shook their heads and switched their tails : and like a faint roar of contending elements the sounds died away in the distance.

Soon after, as if to mock the hope of sleep that had begun to settle on heavy eyelids, the watchman reappeared upon the scene with his perpetual hymn tune and hideous tones. Then, ere long, darkness seemed to lift itself, and creep away from the room ; gradually one object after another grew visible ; the stars paled and flickered and went out ; the sky opened ; and daybreak was proclaimed with an insane chorus of cock-crowing. The dogs, now hoarse and weary, composed themselves to sleep ; the watchman went in ; but it was time for the world to turn out. The baker's house opposite was the first to uprouse. The shutters swung back, and a rush of vapour and

a wholesome smell of fresh-made bread came wafted upon the air. At five o'clock the church bell rang out a loud peal, and the village had entered upon another day.

There was no time to be lost in idleness, although I was far less refreshed than when I had gone to bed the previous night. Breakfast was soon over; a basin of strong hot coffee brought new life with it; the bill was settled with many an inward protest: and at half-past six we were once more on the road to Gastein.

CHAPTER VI.

A FIRST GLIMPSE OF GASTEIN.

THE morning at first was cold enough for any amount of rugs and shawls and great coats : but a few hours later, when the sun had climbed higher into the sky, it grew as intensely, insufferably hot. Now, however, the mountains kept the sun away, and a pass was soon entered, up which the wind rushed with a shiver in its wake. Almost immediately after leaving Golling, a steep ascent of five miles was commenced through the wild and magnificent Pass Lueg, necessitating an extra horse to the summit of the hill. The mountains closed in on both sides, a narrow valley between, through which rushed the Salza ; closed in so nearly in many parts as scarcely to leave room for road and river. Sometimes they appeared as if about to close altogether and bar further progress ; when the turn of an unsuspected angle would open up a fresh

scene of beauty and grandeur, with a suddenness, a mere twinkling of the eye, that seemed to border on the supernatural. The mountains were richly wooded with sombre, unbending pines, and occasionally far up the height, a small white fortress peeped out mysteriously amidst the dark foliage, perched on some jutting rock, to all appearance inaccessible.

After a long drive of this description, in which grandeur was literally heaped upon grandeur, we reached the village of Werfen, and halted an hour for the sake of the beasts, that in this instance were indeed of burden. The valley had expanded, and the mountains now looked a gigantic, overpowering mass, displaying themselves in wildest form and greatest height; surrounding us on every side. In comparison, the houses looked a small, white cluster of sheds, that might easily be crushed and hidden for ever by a mere rolling fragment of rock.

It was yet early, and the whole village was at church, where service was being held. Night and morning, summer and winter, as many as are able assemble for a short prayer. The



PASS LUEG.

organ was playing as we entered the churchyard, but its swell soon died away on the air, and the priest took up his part. In a few minutes the people flocked out and dispersed, each his own way to his own work.

High up on the left hand, on the summit of a rock separating the mountains, seeming by comparison a dwarf between giants, stood the castle, where, years ago, the Protestants were persecuted. At its foot the river rushes past, where the poor bodies were thrown after torture and death; pitched from the rock down the steep, perpendicular precipice. The rock is wooded with pine trees, through which the wind on a calm night goes sighing with a weird, sobbing sound, as if the unhappy spirits were still hovering amongst them, unable to rest in peace until their martyrdom has been avenged.

Some of the mountains are wooded, and abound in wild strawberries: others are barren, rugged, and rock-like, their tops covered with a white dazzling snow that makes them look larger than they really are, and in winter must give them a cold, inhospitable aspect. But at this time of the year,

when people were almost prostrate with the heat, it was refreshing to turn one's eyes upwards. Yet after all, like the fox and the grapes, you ceased to envy the mountain tops; seeking consolation in the thought that probably the cold up there was not less trying to the nerves than the heat below.

Altogether, I liked the place, and the people of the inn, and determined to stay here the night on the return journey, in preference to Golling. But, as has been already remarked, the wish was frustrated. For all that, we shall meet with it again.

Man and beast rested and refreshed, the cavalcade once more set off on its travels. The sun was now well up in the sky, and rugs and coats had to be put out of sight. The amount of dust was an unfathomable mystery. It seemed as if the sandy desert had transferred its quarters bodily; every now and then a gust of wind would carry up a cloud that shut out everything, and left you in chaos. Long before Gastein was thought of, the turnout was so disguised as to be past recognition even by its best friends.

Quitting Werfen, the valley continued to widen a little, and the road separated: one leading into Styria and Carinthia, the other, in due time, to the village of Bischofshoven. Here the Tännengebirge were left behind, and we passed into new, though not less wild and remarkable scenery. The continuous and somewhat monotonous chain of mountain was broken. The Salza was again crossed; and, following the right bank of the river, a steep, rugged ascent led to St. Johann.

This village resembles none other on the road. It is somewhat larger, and of more pretension; a fact due no doubt to its having been burnt some years ago and rebuilt of stone. A few of the old houses remain, memorials of the things which have been, contrasting strangely with those that are. It gave one the impression of entering a little more on civilization, though but a very little. It is yet a village, *pur et simple*, though its people were not quite so pleasant and obliging, as those of the other villages we passed through.

Here a halt was made for lunch. It was about two o'clock, and whether we required

refreshment or not, the coachman was quite certain that, *bon gré, mal gré*, he could no longer dispense with it. There are limits of endurance. A pretty girl came forward into the *speise-saal*, her beauty set off by the picturesque costume of the village. Round her neck was thrown a substantial chain of gold filagree work studded with turquoise and other stones, genuine, if not of the rarest description. Her dress was particularly neat, and the glossy coils and plaits of her hair would have won admiration from the most fastidious votary of the *beau-monde*.

(N.B.—The best thing here was the honey, which is more or less good and prevalent throughout the Tyrol. But for honey, it may be remarked *par parenthèse*; genuine, not-to-be-rivalled honey; such honey as all lovers of the luxury have never dreamt of until tasted; it is necessary to visit Switzerland.)

Beyond this the road swept round, and passed through the valley by the river side. The mountains here seemed to have taken form according to their own fancy, and some of them looked green and fertile. Wild flowers,

beautiful and abundant, grew by the road side, interspersed with strawberry roots laden with unripe fruit. Here and there, a little way up the slopes, were clusters of the Alpine rose, not yet in full bloom. The rapid river bounded over its hard, shallow bed with an unceasing sound, the music of the mountains; whilst at intervals a dull thud smote upon the ear, as a log of wood, floating down to its destination, came into contact with a huge stone jutting its head above the water.

Thus journeying, the small village of Schwarzach was reached. Like many other of the best things that keep themselves retired and unknown, this village, perhaps of all, deserves the most mention, honour, and glory. It was here that in 1729 the leaders of the Protestant peasants met and bound themselves by a solemn oath that, come life or death, victory or persecution, they would never renounce their faith. In the end, some endured martyrdom; others, an immense body, had to fly for refuge, exiles, into foreign lands.

The Salza was again crossed, and Lend in due time reached; immediately after which

you enter the pass leading into the valley of Gastein. The horses again rested, for the most difficult part of the journey was about to commence. It is rumoured that ere very long a railway may be constructed from Salzburg to Lend, thus materially shortening the distance to Gastein. Beyond this point it may safely be asserted that all the power and ingenuity of man will be unable to extend it.

We now turned southward, and with the help of four horses commenced ascending the Pass Klamme, of the terrific nature of which it would be impossible to give an idea. The mountains on either side are steep and precipitous, in parts perpendicular, and at times almost closing in. Ascending higher and higher, the channel grows deeper and deeper still, until at last you look far down into the yawning depths with an involuntary shudder. The rugged road, cut out of the side of the precipice, is in places so narrow that if two carriages happen to meet, one or the other has to draw into a hollow of the rock, blasted out for the purpose. Occasionally you pass under a deep overhanging piece of rock that seems

threatening to fall and crush the luckless wayfarer. The sense of the dangerous and terrible is in many places heightened by cracks and fissures, so that portions of stone, big as houses, seem suspended as it were by a mere thread on the point of snapping. That many enormous pieces have fallen from time to time is testified by the fragments that lie at the bottom of the precipice, and by the eternal ruts that mark their path to their final resting place. So grand and fearful was it, that it is no figure of speech to say the breath was taken away; not from fear—in moments of danger or excitement fear finds no place—but from the nature of the scene. At one point was an ancient gateway and castle, the Klamstein, commanding the pass, built as far back as the eleventh century, and still in perfect preservation.

The ascent achieved, the valley of Gastein opened to view.

There are three villages of Gastein at some distance from each other. Dorf-Gastein, Hof-Gastein, and lastly Wildbad-Gastein, sometimes shortened to Bad-Gastein; more commonly

called simply Gastein; the Gastein par excellence. Beyond this there is still Böckstein, a corruption of Böck-Gastein; a small village now utterly insignificant. Here comes what may fairly be called the end of the world, for there is no passage beyond it for vehicles of any kind.

First, Dorf-Gastein: whence at the far end of the valley the snow mountains towered into sight. But the valley here is so wide; looking all the wider in contrast with the narrow pass just scaled; that you forget the fact of its being a valley. On either hand the mountains are green and fertile, sloping away, and resembling a little those gardens on the banks of the Rhine.

Beyond Hof-Gastein began the final ascent leading to Gastein, which from a distance looked a small cluster of houses embedded in the mountains: great mountains that closed in at the head of the valley in every direction but that from which we were travelling. Hope and expectation alike went down as I wondered whence came the wonderful, much-vaunted, fresh, life-giving breezes.

“That is not Gastein,” I asserted to the coachman, on the verge of despair; as if putting the question in the form of a denial would influence the answer.

“Ya! ya! Gastein,” responded he, quite as emphatically, and with a sigh of relief.

“But I thought Gastein was at the top of a high mountain?”

“I don’t think we have had much down-hill work,” retorted the man, comically.

“True. But there are mountains still higher.”

“And high enough they are,” he answered in the same tone. “I shouldn’t care to drive to the top of one of them. Neither would you, mein Herr.”

“All they who pass these portals leave hope behind.” In some such frame of mind, and in silence, the ascent was accomplished right into Gastein itself. Past a church in course of erection; past a house or two, perched up on the right; past a long, low room that seemed built of nothing but glass; and into the yard of Straubinger’s Hotel, recommended as the best Gastein afforded.

Without regret or sorrow I found myself at length in a place of rest; peace and quiet in prospective. We had not written to secure rooms, and thanks to the early time of year were fortunate enough to find good ones unoccupied. The head waiter led the way down a narrow passage into a good-sized chamber opening into a smaller one, walls and ceiling panelled with polished maple-wood, cool and delightful in appearance; the only rooms in the hotel, two others excepted, so fitted up.

Repose at length. I sat down for a few doubting moments, and looked about. Sensation number one was a shock. Not an electric shock, or the shock of having seen a ghost; but what just then was far worse than either. It threw a damper upon my hopes of Gastein, health, air, and all blessings to follow in their train. Expectations had been terribly exalted. I had thought to find Gastein, as already remarked, on the summit of a high mountain, embracing all the pure air of heaven: and in place, behold a village completely embedded in the earth! Impossible to conceive a spot more so. In England it had been said that

we should find it cold; so cold that the idea of going so early in the year was in itself absurd. Such was the place in prospective; such the climate. In reality it was hot with an intense and glowing heat seldom felt elsewhere. In vain to throw wide the windows; not a breath of air rustled the leaves; not a sound came from the pines on the far-off mountain tops. Other sounds there were, but too loud and near to be agreeable: proceeding from an enormous waterfall that washed the very side of the inn, and with a voice of mighty thunder went dashing down a steep precipice far into the valley. Beautiful it was indeed; but in sound awful.

Unless the reader has dwelt some considerable time beneath the shadow of a waterfall: so near that by stretching out a hand he may catch the spray; and, that, a fall not such as may occasionally be seen on the stage or met with in artificial pleasure-grounds, but one of the largest masses of downpouring water in Europe: unless he has experienced the sensation of a never-ending sound, from which there can be no escape day and night; seeming

to bid defiance by its ceaseless roar: unless he has done all this, it would not be possible for him to sympathise with me in those first hours. Until then I, too, had never dwelt under the shadow of a torrent, great or small: I had never lived in the hearing of any continuous sound save of the restless ocean, which is altogether a thing apart. The one will soothe you to slumber; the other may lash you into—a fine frenzy, certainly—perhaps that of madness.

My reflections came speedily to the following conclusion, divided—like an old-fashioned parson's sermon—into three heads and an application: Unmanly to sit down and shed tears; wicked to swear; impossible to go straight back at once, blow up friends and doctors, and send them all to the —— to Hanover. There remained only to endure.

Yet was it not a thought worthy of despondency to have come so far for so little purpose? Snow? yes, certainly, on the tops of the mountains; in the hollow, the heat of the tropics twice told.

The next day, Sunday, I sallied forth to re-

connoitre what I now looked upon in the light of nothing less than a fiend disguised as a friend. Down the vale, went I, in search of air, where none was. Alone, in a kind of rabid despair, I gave vent to pent-up feelings, and like a maniac shouted for air. A dozen echoes from the surrounding mountains seemed to bring back the mocking answer, Where? At least to an overwrought imagination it sounded very much like it. Up higher, now, into the mountains, and so nearer the sun, but the exertion gained no other reward. On to the Bridge of Terror, where you might look up and down at the overpowering rush of water. A glorious sight; to be admitted with all one's powers; but in that existing frame of mind yielding neither pleasure nor consolation. Then back to the hotel in time for the one o'clock table-d'hôte; and, all things considered, with some appetite for the banquet.

Monday rose red-hot, and bright as the preceding day. The torrent, with its unceasing roar, was still there. Instead of feeling better for the rest from travel, I seemed to have gone back many degrees since Saturday; and was

beginning to debate most seriously upon the expediency of packing up and running away somewhere, when a thought flashed like an inspiration upon the dulled senses—that it might be as well first to call upon a doctor, and ask him in what lay the wonderful virtue of the place.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WATERS OF GASTEIN.

THE Gastein season is supposed to be in the full tide of its prosperity in the months of July and August. Early in June people begin to arrive, each day adding to the number; but not for a month later do they overflow. In May, comparatively speaking, the place is deserted. And yet for pleasantness, for beauty of nature, for health, the months of May and September are infinitely to be chosen before those that intervene.

Gastein, little known to the English, is frequented principally by Prussians, Russians, and Hungarians; less generally by the Austrians, though actually in the dominions of his Catholic Majesty. The polished, pleasure-seeking Austrians possess other places of resort, gayer, brisker, and less difficult of access. Pre-eminent amongst these stands Ischl, in the Salzkammergut, one of the most delightful

and romantic spots on the face of the whole earth.

It was now the month of May, when, as has just been said, Gastein is, comparatively speaking, deserted. Thus, when about ten o'clock I strolled out, in obedience to my inspiration, I found, in my walk from Straubinger's to the doctor's consulting-room, little to distract the attention beyond a terror-stricken cat flying on the wings of fear from some unseen danger; and the keepers of the stalls in front of the hotel, who, basking in the sunshine, were lazily awaiting the hour for their midday meal. Turning to the left, I soon came upon a small stone building consisting of two rooms. On the door, in large black letters, was written DAMPFBAD; on the lintel the name of a doctor, and *Nachtglöcke*. The door stood invitingly open; an omen to the superstitiously inclined. I rang boldly, and as the peal echoed through the small stone building, I felt that the leap in the dark, the first step, had been taken. Now for good news, or evil.

To the presence of the doctor—a little man, full of life, energy, and intelligence—was an



GASTEIN: VIEW OF STRAUBINGER'S AND WATERFALL.

interval of a few moments. With many apologies for the unfinished state of his consulting-room—he had but just returned from his winter practice at Nice—he handed his visitor a chair, and sat himself down opposite. A German, he spoke also English and French; and though he often made ludicrous mistakes, none laughed more heartily than he, when they were made clear to him. We continued for the most part to hold intercourse in one or other of the two languages, as long as I remained in Gastein.

“My dear sir, you come for the baths.”

I stared. Not by any means had I come with such intentions; but it was vain to endeavour to explain this to the doctor. To visit Gastein and not take the baths was a wild idea his brain refused to admit or comprehend.

“When did you arrive?”

“On Saturday.”

“Saturday. To-day is Monday. And you have not taken a bath. My dear sir, allow me to congratulate you in the highest manner upon your wisdom and patience. Most men are in such a very great hurry that they jump in-

to the bath immediately they arrive." Full stop, and a change of tone. "You should not do this," he continued emphatically. "You should wait one day to rest; one day to become accustomed to the air; and the third day take the bath."

"But," I cried, "I am disappointed in the air. It had been reported as wonderful; pure and bracing. To all this it appears the exact opposite; hot and unrefreshing."

"This air of to-day is not the true Gastein climate," returned the doctor. "Never have I known it so hot as this. The reason is, that for long we have had no rain. The amount of evaporation here is so great that without rain we cannot live. The air becomes dry; the ground parched; nature languishes. When the rain comes then you will see and feel and breathe the true, health-giving air of Gastein."

He spoke in tones of such exaltation, such convincing firmness; raising his voice a little with each sentence; that it was impossible not to feel somewhat reassured.

"If that be the case," I said, fervently, "I hope it may come soon."

"Patience. It is coming. I feel it. In a

few days all will be changed. Meanwhile, you take a bath to-morrow."

"I did not come for the baths," I cried, with a last desperate effort to make him understand. "I was ordered to take the air. Concerning baths never a word was spoken."

"Not take the baths!" ejaculated the doctor, with raised hands, a look of positive terror creeping into his face. "Come to Gastein and not take the baths! Then, why come at all? You can find air in other parts of the world; better air than this; but the baths of Gastein are to be found in Gastein alone. Nowhere else are there such waters. If you are overworked and require rest, they will cure you. The air is all very well as far as it goes; but it is the baths you must look to."

Making due deductions for prejudice or partiality, there yet seemed sense and logic in these words. Certainly it was impossible to discover at present any great virtue in the air. Therefore, plunging boldly into the unknown future, I resolved on the spot to give the baths a chance of working the good prophesied.

“I suppose they will not do harm?” I cautiously remarked.

The doctor shook his head. “I am certain of that, by merely looking at you. Leave yourself without fear in my hands.”

He was kind and attentive, willing and wishing to be of use in all manner of ways, apart from his professional capacity. Through the whole of a four weeks’ sojourn he was always the same. Happiest, it seemed, when most actively employed in the welfare of others.

Before leaving the Dampfbad, I spoke of the unpleasantness of the waterfall.

“You are at Straubinger’s,” said the doctor. “What is the number of your room?”

“Seven.”

“So! On the ground floor—the panelled chambers. I know them well. Count Bismarck occupied them two seasons running. I was his medical adviser.”

This mark of distinction was by no means sufficient to atone for the discomforts of No. 7, with which sentiment the doctor seemed to acquiesce.

“The noise of the waterfall is certainly disagreeable,” he added; “especially to those unaccustomed to it. Some cannot endure it; they have no rest by day, no sleep by night. These are my highly nervous and excitable patients. Others, on the contrary, it soothes; their slumbers in consequence are deep and long. One patient of mine, a general in the Prussian army, who had overworked his brain with military tactics, fancied he heard a tune in the waterfall. Whatever melody entered his head on first awaking, was taken up by the torrent and carried on throughout the day. It would drive him mad, he said: and I believe it would, had he remained. He was obliged to take rooms in Hof-Gastein.”

“Did he recover in the end?”

“I don’t know. He went away at the appointed time, and I never heard of him again.”

“With me it is not so bad as that,” I said. “But it gives me a feeling of unrest: as if I should like to get away from it and could not.”

“In short,” returned the doctor, “it is a perpetual nightmare to you: and no wonder. You want rest and quiet, and that you must

have. You must change your hotel. This afternoon I will accompany you to the Hirsch : they may have rooms to suit you, and there the fall is almost inaudible. I have also rooms in my villa ; you can see it from here. Accommodation is so scarce in the village that during the season every unoccupied room in every house is, and ought to be, given up to visitors."

He crossed to the window and pointed to a pretty house on the mountain side. It was more elevated than any other house in Gastein, in situation charming.

"I will show you over it this afternoon," said the doctor. "But," he modestly added, "I do not think you would be sufficiently comfortable there. Look here," he continued, drawing a thermometer from a round wooden case ; "this I will send to your room, and to-morrow morning you must put it into your hand on first awakening. It will give me the temperature of your body, and thus enable me to regulate the heat of your bath. To-morrow at ten o'clock I will come to you, and be present when you enter the bath : on no account must you go into it alone."

After a few more remarks we separated ; the doctor reiterating his promise to call in the afternoon.

It was far too hot to walk about ; therefore I returned to the hotel, and threw myself on the sofa, weary and desponding, yet in more hopeful spirits than I had left it in the morning. In a very short time I fell asleep in spite of the rushing water, and dreamed that I was on board a steamer starting from the tropics to the North Pole in search of the North Wind. From this delightful sensation, I was speedily awakened by the ringing of the table-d'hôte bell : a summons by no means to be disregarded.

There was a very small attendance ; twenty in all, perhaps. The dinner, to speak temperately, was bad, and I flattered myself that as the number of guests increased, so in proportion it would improve. A hope destined to prove a delusion.

First, of course, came soup, thin and poor, which reminded me forcibly of the schoolboy's recipe—a quart of water boiled down to a pint and served up : then boiled beef, having the

appearance of bouilli, without any of the merit of that old-fashioned dish. Next came sausages smothered in a species of sauer-kraut (I live its agonies over again in writing), of which the terrible smell had penetrated to us long before the entrance of the unsavoury mess. In an evil moment, influenced by the pangs of hunger, I took half a sausage upon my plate, and carefully divesting it of every trace of the offending vegetable, I, with trembling heart, cut off a small slice. The consequences were not fatal, or even very serious : I did not quite expire : I did not follow the example of the robust German lady, vis-à-vis, who was not sufficiently well bred to make even an attempt at swallowing the dainty morsel she had taken ; but I never repeated the experiment.

Next came some veal, hard, dry, tough, and tasteless—I might multiply adjectives ad infinitum—accompanied by salad. This was followed by a large baked pudding that had swelled out over the dish to proportions alluring to an empty stomach ; but when the spoon was applied, it was found to possess no inside, and literally collapsed.

This was all. And we were kept so long waiting between each course—an expression too dignified to be applicable—that about an hour and a half had been devoted to the ceremony. It was not the quantity that was so much to be objected to—though that was meagre enough—as the quality, and the bad cooking; and, as the days went on, the want of variety. Many a time I rose from table as hungry as I had sat down.

After dinner, at the appointed hour, in the midst of the broiling heat, the doctor arrived, carrying a yellow alpaca umbrella and a thin overcoat, without which two appendages he was never to be seen: the one as a protection from the sun, the other in case of rain.

“You may laugh,” he cried, as I looked at the coat and wondered why he had brought it out on so hot a day. “You have an old saying ‘Who laughs last laughs best.’ I should never have attained to this age without ailments, had I not been careful of my body. It is an excellent servant, but a poor master. I never by any chance go without my coat and umbrella.”

It was quite true : he never did.

“I suppose you have come to fulfil your promise,” I remarked. “To help me to find out a lodging where I shall not be altogether sent mad by this uproarious waterfall?”

“Certainly,” he replied. “Unless you are becoming familiar enough with the noise not to heed it.”

“Not in a hundred years,” I returned, “though it would kill me in a hundredth part of that time. Like the general, I shall soon hear tunes in the air.”

“Allons, then !” he cried, laughing, and jumping up. “To the Hirsch !”

“I want you to give me some account of Gastein,” I said, as we left the hotel. “You must know its history from beginning to end—I know neither end nor beginning,”

“The very thing I was proposing to myself,” replied the doctor. “Gastein deserves to be better known than it is. I have written a book about it in my own tongue, and small brochures have been translated into French and English ; but few of them, I imagine, have penetrated into your country.”

Here the doctor cleared his throat ominously, furled and unfurled again his yellow umbrella, and resumed the thread of his discourse.

“Gastein,” he said, “as I need not remind you, is on the borders of Carinthia, 3,135 feet above the level of the Mediterranean. For the last sixteen years I have taken meteorological observations upon the country, and from the frequent rains and occasional snows that fall upon the mountains in mid-season, I believe that as a summer resort it is the coolest place in Europe. From the nature of the soil it is clear that the two valleys of Böckstein and Hof-Gastein were vast lakes, drained by great convulsions of the earth. Probably the same convulsions, which rent the rocks and admitted a passage for these waterfalls, cast up at the same time these hot, health-giving springs.”

“That must have taken place centuries ago?”

“Yes. The history of the Valley of Gastein is properly divided into five periods. The first commences with the discovery of the hot springs in the year 680, and terminates with

the first improvement and elevation of the place in 1436."

"A gap of nearly 800 years!"

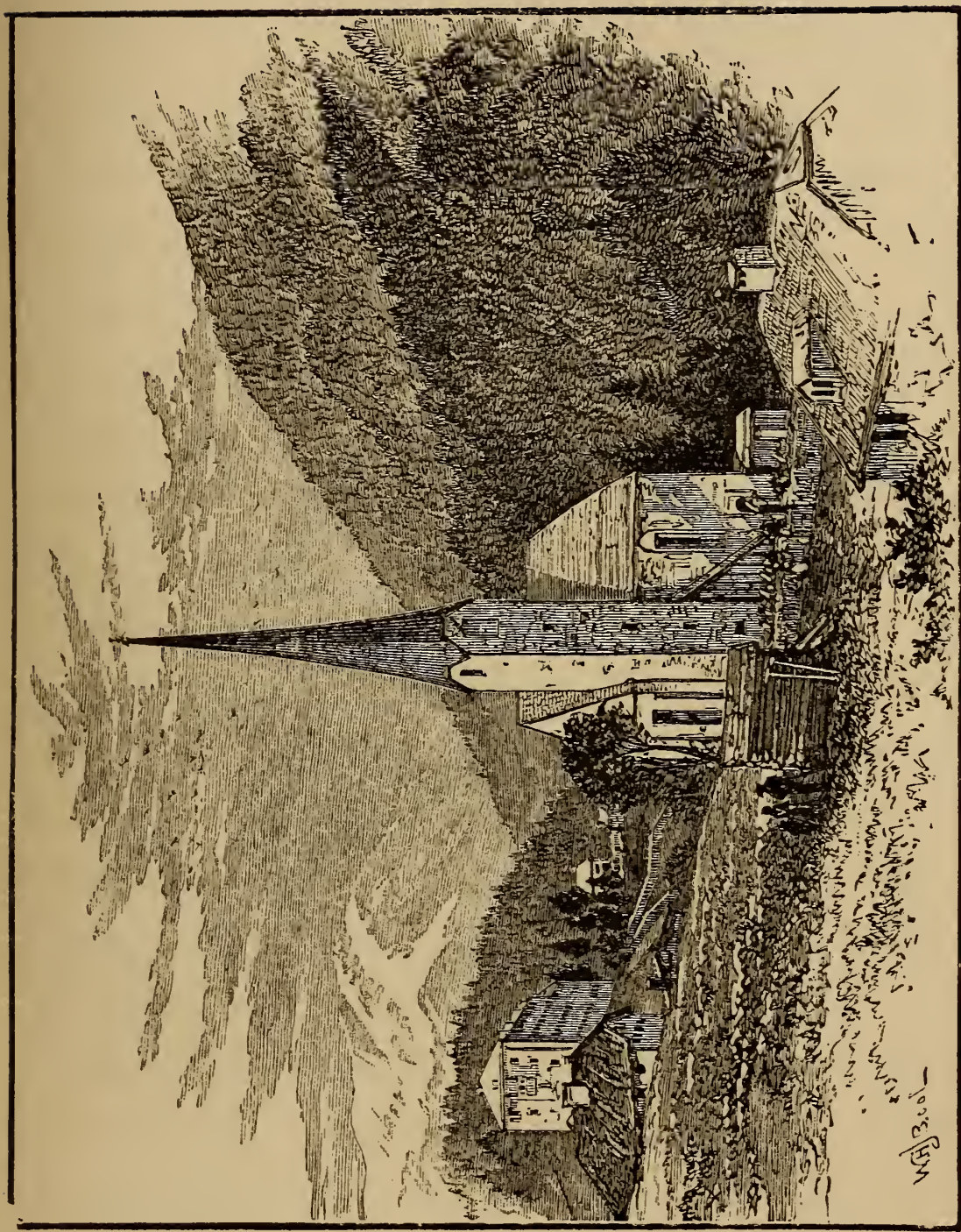
"Good things are of slow growth," observed the doctor, sententiously; "but in the end they are sure. Gastein is even yet in its infancy. I prophesy for it a great career in the future."

"What caused Gastein suddenly to awake out of its long slumber in the year 1436?"

"It happened," replied the doctor, "that three hunters, following a stag, found him bathing his wounds in some hot springs, to which the vapours attracted their attention."

"But that legend," said I, with a laugh, "is connected with so many of your German baths. A stag seems generally to have been the cause of discovery."

"In this instance," returned the doctor, "I think it is a true tale. At any rate we will believe so, and be grateful to the stag. Instinct, you see, is made useful to man as well as beast. But here we are at the Hirsch and I must delay my account until our visit of inspection is over."



VIEW OF ST. NICHOLAS' CHURCH AND HIRSCH INN.

The people of the Hirsch were very civil and obliging. The rooms were airy and comfortable, and the sound of the waterfall could scarcely be heard. From the front windows, low down, stretched the long, smooth plain, with here and there small wooden houses dotted about like nests in the grass. The many shades of green caught the eye, and the small stream, winding capriciously through all, looked like a thread of liquid silver in a carpet of mossy velvet. On either side towered the mountains; the huge Gamskarkogl, from whose heights a hundred glaciers may be seen, rising above his fellows. Far away, cutting the mountain-side, tapered the spire of the church of Hof-Gastein, looking, in comparison, about the size of a toy from a child's Noah's Ark. Had I not made up my mind that the doctor's rooms would suit me better than any others, I should have taken these on the spot. As it was, I said that before deciding I should like him to show me over his own house.

“With pleasure,” he answered,” but not to-day. I do not want you to get in the least degree tired. To-morrow afternoon I will take

you up. Let us now, as we retrace our way, continue our account of Gastein. Where were we?"

"At the first period and the wounded stag."

"True. Well, later on, the Romans seeking for gold and silver, found here, under the first Bishop Rupert, two pious Christian men, whom they carried away to Rome, to be devoured by lions in the amphitheatre. These martyrs are now celebrated as patrons of the Church."

"By way of reward?"

"By way of commemoration," rebuked the doctor; "and as an example for us to follow in the steps of good men."

"At the risk of being devoured by lions?"

"Those days are gone by. The working of the gold mines was continued under the control of the bishops of Salzburg. Time went on, and when there were as yet but five or six rude cottages in Gastein, the Emperor Frederic, grandfather of Maximilian the First, came here for the baths. The second period begins with the first civilization of Gastein in 1436, and extends to the first scientific examination of the hot springs in 1562, by the celebrated

Theophrastus Paracelsus. The third period dates from 1562 to the first scientific analysis by the new method of chemistry, in 1780, by Barisani.

“ About this time many events took place. Earthquakes, inundations, and fires; which completely destroyed Hof-Gastein, then the capital, if we may so call it, of the valley. Then followed religious wars, and the expulsion of the Protestant miners—a signal for the decay of mines, and the cause of the development of the thermal station.

“ The fourth period extends from 1780 to 1830. The fifth from 1830 to the present time. In this last period, Gastein has made most progress, especially in the few past years. We have established a hospital; built a stone bridge over the waterfall—no slight achievement for Gastein; fifteen new houses have lately been erected, together with the long glass gallery that in some places would be dignified to the rank of an établissement: we have established a post and telegraph office; the principal spring has been discovered, and its properties carefully analysed.

“ This, my dear sir, is all I can tell you, in words, of Gastein. You will find it more elaborately narrated in my book; and in a somewhat less condensed form in the brochures. But I think the above facts contain the pith of the matter; sufficient to satisfy your curiosity or search for knowledge.”

“ What, then,” I inquired, “ are the chief maladies for which these waters are useful ?”

“ Chiefly for all complaints affecting the nervous system. I need not tell you that this is saying a great deal. One of their chief virtues is in restoring those suffering from overwork of the brain. But they are good for overwork of every kind—that of body as well as brain. In cases of weakness, also, arising from wounds or other causes. Cut your finger, and plunge it into ordinary hot water, the blood flows more freely; plunge it into this mineral water, and immediately the flow ceases. This is one undoubted proof of its possessing distinctive and peculiar properties. It is excellent in cases of paralysis and gout; often restoring the former when all other remedies and experiments have failed. I could tell you of many

remarkable cases, of long standing, that have come under my immediate notice. It is excellent in cases of rheumatism. One reason to be assigned for this is the wonderful amount of electricity contained in the water, thus enabling the power to be administered to the body as in no other form. But," exclaimed the doctor, brandishing his yellow weapon, which at this moment served as a walking-stick, "I must be off. Though Gastein is so empty, I have already a few patients on my list. So good-bye. To-morrow, at ten o'clock, I will come to you."

With a handshake, without which token of friendliness he never met you, though it were a hundred times a day, the doctor abruptly took leave.

CHAPTER VIII.

TAKING A BATH.

PRECISELY at ten o'clock the following morning he made his appearance, brimful, as usual, of life and energy. We proceeded together to the bath-room, which looked comfortable, but felt warm.

“ Ah!” he cried. “ That bad-meister, who is so fat himself that he needs an unlimited amount of heat to bring him down, thinks every one in like condition with himself. He has a mania for over-heating the rooms. I have warned him of this over and over again, but it is of no use. He is a salamander: when we are melting, he feels himself in his element.”

In a few moments I had divested myself of every vestige of a refined and civilized age. The doctor proceeded then to knock and thump me about, sounded my liver, listened to the beating of my heart, looked to see if my

shoulders were straight, and finally bade me enter the water.

“Is every one subjected to these examinations?” I asked, as my feet touched the stone bottom.

“Without exception,” was the emphatic reply. “I allow no one to enter the baths without it. How do you find the water?”

“It seems comfortable; neither warm nor cold.”

“That is just right. As far as possible you should feel as if you were in nothing at all.”

“I should have thought the hotter the water the more efficacious the bath.”

“Ah!” he cried. “Like many other men who are apt to form opinions. A little does good, a great deal must do more, you argue. It is the reverse. If you took the bath too hot, it would——”

“What?”

“I hardly know what,” he laughed. “It might do you much harm, but it would not certainly bring the desired relief. Do you ever take a warm bath in England?”

“Not being quite uncivilized—yes.”

“ Then I invite you to compare your sensations after those baths and these, and to give me a description of them. And now I will leave you. Twenty minutes are nearly up; the wrinkles are coming to your finger-ends, and when they are well developed you must come out. Then lie down for an hour, a sheet your sole covering. The latter I call an air bath, and it is essential it should be taken. Now farewell. This afternoon I will call for you.”

He left the room, and shortly after I entered the adjoining compartment, and lay down for an hour upon a small sofa bed. A calm, soothing sense of stillness crept over mind and body; a sense of rest and repose unspeakably delicious. Upon going into the open air when the time was up, in place of the lassitude so often felt after a warm bath in England, the sensations were of a precisely opposite character. The air, if warm, seemed light: the feet scarcely appeared to touch the ground, so buoyant was the body. All nature looked brighter, the trees fresher; even the waterfall for the moment was less unbearable. I felt in condition for an

expedition to the top of the highest mountain.

The dinner hour came and passed with much the same result as on the previous day. No new faces at the table ; no fresh artistic efforts on the part of the cook ; the same unsatisfactory dishes ; the same amount of time spent in not eating. Yet every one appeared happy, and blessed with a good appetite. The curious thing about the guests was that for the most part they appeared the very picture of health and strength ; it was scarcely possible to imagine them here for the purposes of renovation. Appetite, bright eyes, lively conversation ; all this abounded. And to a silent observer, opportunity of studying the habits and manners of the people abounded also.

Determined to take it idly—what other resource was there under the circumstances ?—I lay down after dinner, until the doctor entered and roused me.

“ What ? ” he cried. “ Napping ? Sleeping after dinner ? ”

“ No, no, ” I returned. “ But what would you ? Repose after that heavy meal is neces-

sary. The table-d'hôte, my dear doctor, like many other things in life, wants a good deal of reforming."

The doctor shrugged his shoulders. "I hear complaints on all sides," he answered, "but what can I do? You must put up with it for the sake of health. I am glad you were not sleeping. Nothing is worse after dinner: it relaxes the body and stupifies the mind. But if, at times, you really cannot keep awake, then drop off for a quarter of an hour; not longer. If you cannot wake yourself, desire some one to do it for you."

"It is by no means one of my habits," I said. "But here, and in this state of the atmosphere, what is to be done?"

"Go into the wandelbahn and play the piano: or climb up a little way into the mountain, and sit down in one of the arbours; or buy a horn and blow it: anything, in short, rather than disobedience to orders. And now I will pilot you to my humble abode. It was the best I could get in Gastein. Some day, perhaps, I may build myself another."

We went forth and took our way through the

wandelbahn : a room about four hundred feet long, built chiefly of glass, low and narrow. It was used by the visitors generally in wet weather, upon which occasion the band took shelter there, and frantically performed Strauss's waltzes and other popular tunes for an hour at a stretch. Invalids were wheeled about in bath-chairs, and people who were not invalids paraded up and down, backwards and forwards, laughing, gesticulating, talking in tones not particularly subdued, after their manner. The place contained a circulating library, separate reading rooms for ladies and gentlemen, and a refreshment room. It overlooked the wildest part of Gastein on the one side, the road on the other ; therefore, everything that transpired might be seen from its windows.

Through this we quietly strolled, glad of a moment's shelter from the burning rays of the sun, which appeared but to laugh to scorn the powers of an umbrella. We soon found ourselves again beneath the bare sky, and the doctor's yellow alpaca was immediately hoisted, whilst his inevitable coat, thrown over his arm, trailed gracefully behind him. A few minutes'

walk, a steep ascent, and we stood on the doctor's territory. Here he was lord and master: provided his eyes took not too wide a range, monarch of all he surveyed. House, ground, all belonged to him.

As we neared the villa, a somewhat laughable incident occurred: for to such dignity in this quiet spot was the most trifling event elevated. The doctor was a man at all times ready to do a good turn, and would put himself to trouble in order to be useful. A philanthropist, but at the same time a strict lover of justice, whether in upholding his own rights and privileges or those of others. On this especial afternoon, as we approached the villa, we perceived an army of goats feeding upon his banks and devouring his grass, attended by a sleepy herd. Down went the umbrella; up it shot again as a menacing weapon. "Ah! ah!" shrieked he, rushing full tilt at the despoilers, something after the manner of Don Quixote charging the windmills: "Ah! ah!" he reiterated, brandishing frantically his deadly instrument. "Das ist nichts! das ist mein grund!" With so much effect was his power exerted, that the

goats one and all scampered off, as if another horned personage had been at their heels ; and the sleepy goatherd had no resource but to follow with alacrity. Then the doctor turned to me, a laugh taking the place of his avenging expression.

“I am compelled to be severe with them,” he said, “or this would be a daily occurrence. And what would my own poor goats do without their grass?”

The doctor's house was very pleasantly situated, and took in all Gastein from its best points of view. Two or three arbours were scattered about the garden, where it was possible to sit out all day long in the fresh air. He pointed out with some pride various small scientific matters, which his own ingenuity had constructed. I soon made up my mind that only here would I stay as long as we remained in Gastein. Everything was so home-like, so clean to a fault, so comfortable and cheerful, that all I had yet seen passed out of mind.

From the windows the look-out was wild and grand. In the hollow was Gastein ; we looked

down upon Straubinger's as from a great height ; here it was possible to enjoy a view of the waterfall. Not so far off that no sound could penetrate, we were just at that distance where it became soothing rather than otherwise, and at night would induce sleep. On all sides the mountains reared their heads, green or barren, or partially covered with fast-melting snows.

As days went on the move proved a wise one.

No place could have been pleasanter. Everything the doctor possessed was placed at the disposal of his inmates. As for Marie, the housekeeper, she certainly must have owned the kindest heart in the world, and morning, noon, and night, for nearly a month, never relaxed her attentions. Not that she was in any way obtrusive ; for, like many of her class in the Tyrol, there was a delicacy of feeling about her, and, it may be added, a certain amount of refinement, which invariably prevented her from going too far in her endeavours. Many were the gossips with Marie. She was quick and intelligent ; had travelled about a good deal with

the doctor, and had made use of her eyes and head.

It was a pleasure to bid farewell to Straubinger's, the Bismarck rooms, and the roaring waterfall. Straubinger himself I had never seen, though I one day fruitlessly endeavoured to gain audience with the renowned maître. I subsequently learned that you might ask for him fifty times before he would come to you. In Gastein he is a great man; magistrate, sometimes mayor, butcher, and general adjudicator of all questions, public and domestic. Once upon a time a gentleman, thinking his bill at the hotel very much overcharged, requested to see a magistrate, and forthwith was ushered into the presence of Herr Straubinger himself. It will easily be imagined how he fared in the sequel.

The very day of removal from the hotel to the doctor's, down came the long-looked-for rain. It lasted some hours : and what a change in the atmosphere and all vegetation when all was over ! Everything until then had appeared dried up and sunburnt. The trees were drooping, the flowers hung down, the forget-me-nots,

which here grow in wild profusion, were at death's door. Now, in the course of a few hours, all had brightened, had freshened into new life and vigour. The air was cool; and as night drew on, it became colder than was agreeable.

“Now you have the true Gastein air,” cried the doctor, coming up to pay his evening visit. “Am I not right in saying that in summer it is the coolest place in Europe?”

“It is now almost too much the other way,” I replied. “As cold as before it was hot. Are you subject to these extremes?”

“At night the true Gastein air is always cold—that is, cold for summer. And so much the better. The days will generally be hot enough. If you wish to walk you must rise early, and take care to be home before the sun has any power.”

No long walks; no exertion of any sort or description: such were the doctor's orders. When I suggested to him one day that I should like to climb one of the mountains, he cut a caper in the room, and asked if I wished to ruin my health, and undo all the effect of my baths.

“ I don't perceive much effect to ruin,” I returned. “ I feel weaker than when I came here. Although I enjoy the baths and their soothing influence, it is impossible to say that they have done me any good.”

This was true. After the fashion of the little marchioness and her orange-peel, I had often tried hard to make believe that I was accomplishing wonders; but the effort, in itself painful, had invariably to yield to stern fact.

“ I am glad to hear it,” was the doctor's reply.

“ You have misunderstood me——” I began.

“ Not a bit,” he interrupted. “ You say you feel less strong than when you came here, and I reply I am glad of it. It is a good sign. Up to the ninth bath you will get worse; after that, gradually better. The real benefit derived from these baths does not as a rule show itself for three months after they have been discontinued.”

“ How is that ?”

“ I don't know. But it is almost invariably

the case. The effect of the baths is never immediate; they act upon the system gradually. I need not tell you the result is likely to be more lasting."

If simplicity of living could do anything towards recovery, there was undoubtedly every cause for hope. Soon after six o'clock, Marie would make her first appearance with breakfast; a frugal store, consisting of coffee, butter, and two small rolls about the size and shape of russet apples. This elaborate meal disposed of, an hour's walk ensued, which, being down-hill all the way there, and up-hill all the way back, was usually as much as I could accomplish.

The same walk taken morning after morning would have become monotonous enough, but that it was scarcely possible to grow weary of the scenery, which, at each fresh appearance, seemed to show itself in some new aspect. The variations of light and shade, the tints of sky and mountain, were countless and ever-changing. At times the latter would be buried in a mist, leaving the valleys alone visible; again, the mountains would be clear, and the

valleys full of a white vapour that assumed the appearance of a sea, as now for a moment it stood still, and now rolled majestically along, with a swelling, surging movement. One of my favourite occupations was to sit and watch these mists as they gradually unrolled themselves; to note the strange shapes they assumed, the weird-like aspect they at times threw over the landscape. Then, when the sun burst forth from behind the grey clouds, how quickly they would hurry away, as if afraid of being pursued and overcome by so powerful an enemy!

It was a rare thing in these walks to meet any one beyond the peasantry; and they perhaps were the pleasantest people to encounter; as a race of peasants, the handsomest I had ever seen, and the most innately courteous; the tall, strong, athletic forms of the men well set off by the picturesque costume of the country. The women in youth are many of them beautiful, but they quickly grow old and ugly. I have never seen faces so hard and wrinkled as those of the aged women; many of their forms were bowed and bent, and shrunken, almost,

as it seemed, to a state of collapse. They are subject to two sad scourges; the loss of their teeth while young, and a malady called goitre-throats. The dress of the women was also very picturesque, and some of them wore showy jewellery round their necks, that would have driven many a stern Calvinist to serious discourse upon the pomps and vanities of the world.

I often wondered whence they inherited their beauty; for they are an exception to the generality of the peasants in mountainous countries. In Switzerland, for instance, the peasants are, as a rule, remarkable for plainness, and are inferior in mind and manners. They are less simple and intelligent; less courteous and hospitable; more selfish, and eager to do things for the sake of gain. In the Salzkammergut, as far as appearance was concerned, it was much the same.

Nowhere, as here, have I ever seen so many wild flowers. They grew in profusion, and formed a distinctive feature in the landscape, an object of interest in the walk. So abundant, so varied in colour, that many a field has



GASTEIN PEASANT.

seemed clothed with a vast carpet of the most brilliant hues. Here and there upon the mountain sides, might be seen clusters of what is always given as the Alpine rose; and of what I always imagined to be so until my ignorance was enlightened with a shock by the doctor.

We were one day strolling together in his garden, enjoying the freshness of nature after a shower. Suddenly he pounced upon a small tree bearing a solitary blossom somewhat resembling the wild rose of our English hedges, but fuller and more perfect.

“Ah!” he exclaimed. “I am delighted.”

“What’s the matter?” said I, thinking from his excited manner that he had found a treasure, or made some new geological discovery.

“I am delighted,” he repeated. “Delighted that this tree should blossom before your departure. Here is the true Alpine rose. That other flower that they give you for the Alpine rose is not a rose at all, as you must know. It is a species of the rhododendron, but so common as to be universally known by the more ro-

mantic name. The veritable Alpine rose is far more rare. This is the true specimen. And this, as far as I know, is the only natural rose without a thorn."

"A rose without a thorn! Then what," said I, "becomes of the proverb?"

The doctor laughed. "When you hear it quoted, you may contradict it," he replied. "Send all disbelievers to me for proof. Examine this tree for yourself. Take this stem and look at it."

He plucked the flower with a branch. It was certainly without thorns.

"I hope," said I, "all proverbs are not to terminate a long life after this fashion."

"There are a few, I believe, would not bear too close examination," answered the doctor. "But it is not our business to refute them."

"Do you know," said I, looking hard at the flower, "I am sorry to have been mistaken in the true Alpine rose. This one is not half so pretty as the other—which also possesses a character of its own, and, in look at any rate, is far more uncommon."

"Ah," said the doctor, putting a hand on

my shoulder, “does not this remind you of real life? Do we not often mistake the false for the true? are we not prone to imagine such and such a thing good and great? its possession happiness unspeakable—so long as it is impossible to us? And when a leaf is turned in the book of life, and the impossible is within our grasp, does it not change aspect as completely as turning changes a kaleidoscope?”

“But——” returned I.

“But me no buts,” he interrupted, laughing. “I know what you would say: that you still regret the old rose. Well, what have I to do with that? Truth is truth, and to it all else must yield.”

CHAPTER IX.

RAINY DAYS.

CLOSELY shut in by mountains; exposed only to the South winds, and these to a very modified degree; the air of Gastein was more than commonly trying and relaxing. But for the cold nights it would have been well-nigh unbearable. After rain, too, the atmosphere would be refreshing: and rain fell almost daily.

It was a luxury to sit out in one of the arbours, after a sharp shower, and note its effects. Then indeed, as the doctor termed it, you breathed the true mountain air; and had it been always thus, Gastein would more than have held its own in comparison with other European climates. But so great was the amount of evaporation, that in a few hours, even after long, heavy rain, all traces thereof would disappear.

If two days passed without a shower the

place became intolerable; and therefore, as Nature generally is true to herself, rainy days in Gastein were in the predominant. But they must not be compared with the rainy days in England, or thought to be as unpleasant. A shower, perhaps, lasted an hour or two; then the clouds rolled away from the tops of the mountains, the sun shone forth, the blue sky made glad the heart of man, and in a very little time you could not tell that rain had fallen.

One week's incessant downpour we certainly had, but it was a grand exception. And dull enough, and dreary, the exception proved. Everybody looked blue and disconsolate. The band took permanent refuge in the wandelbahn, and thundered out Strauss's waltzes, varied by operatic selections. The visitors walked up and down the long room as if their lives depended upon exercise, until the very boards creaked under the weight of the burden. One old lady was wont to turn out in a kind of military cloak, and a nightcap surmounted by an enormous brown hat. She had been to the waters of Carlsbad, for liver or lungs, or

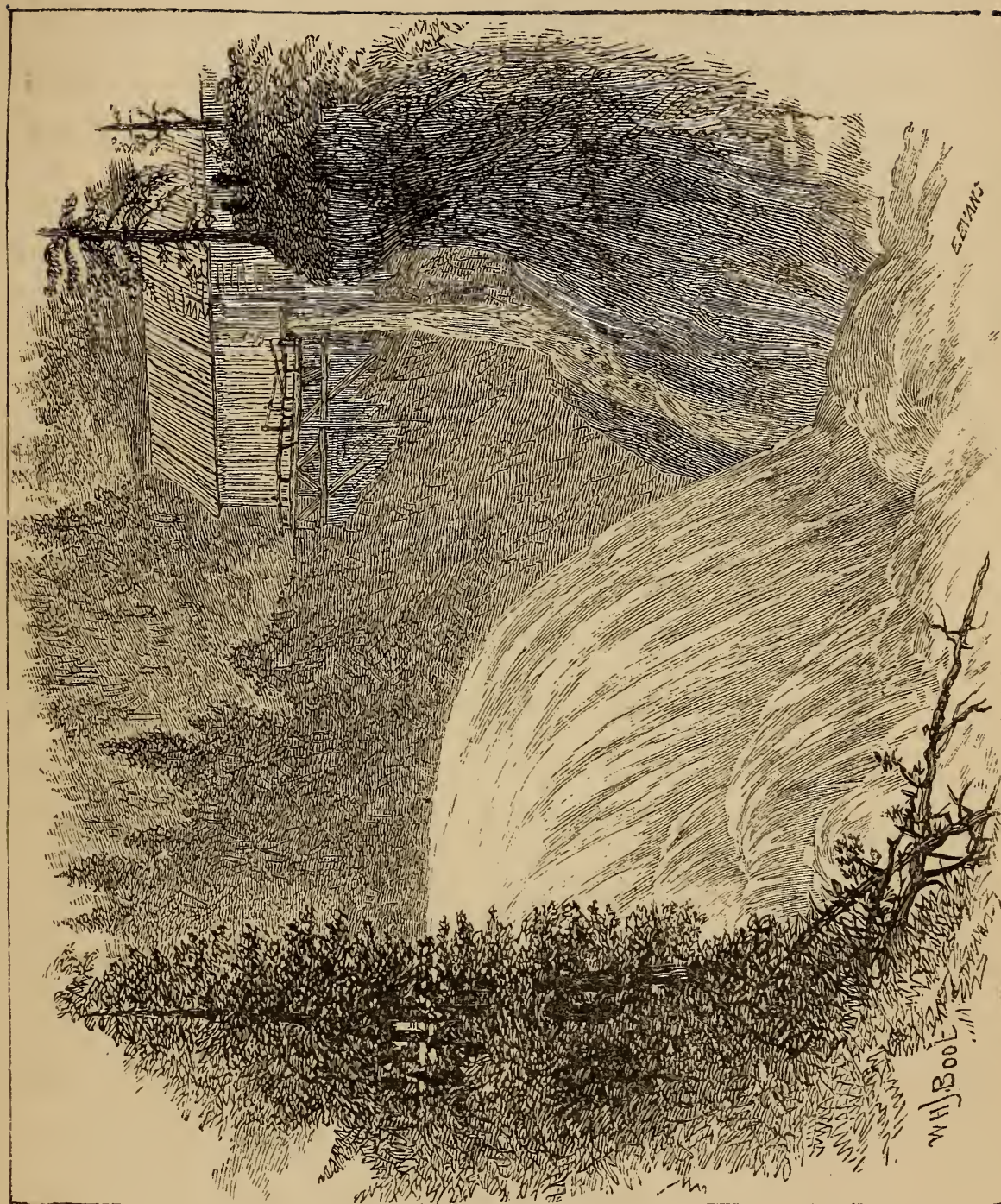
the derangement of some other internal organ, and was finishing up with Gastein. In this guise she one day fastened herself upon me, no doubt mistaking an astonished gaze for one of fascination; and she chattered away, now in German, now in broken English, until the efforts of her victim to preserve gravity were becoming painful. Luckily the doctor came in at the right moment, and released me from the humiliation of an outburst. After this I was prepared for her, and on further acquaintance she proved as good and kindly natured as she appeared eccentric.

It was certainly a dreadfully wet week, and at the end of five days people began to ask each other whether it would ever cease. I hunted up the library woman and made her look out her brightest and lightest novels, which were eagerly devoured, in spite of the doctor's commands that all mental exertion, even the most trifling, should be avoided. But flesh and blood cannot endure beyond certain limits. I had by heart the colour of every pair of eyes in the place, the cut of every figure; I believe I could distinguish the sound

of each particular footstep, and the exact click with which every man closed the door. I summed every pane of glass, and enjoyed a continual feast of terror in watching the awful and impossible contortions of the man with the violoncello. It seemed for all the world as if music caused a continual stream of rheumatic pains to flow through his body. When the grand crash terminated in a sudden calm, betraying everybody's voice at a shrill pitch, his chest would heave and the perspiration pour off his face as if it would mock and laugh at the feebler efforts of the streaming elements of the sky. I was wont to pity the man, though he never knew it, and therefore was none the better for it; and would wonder who supplied him with handkerchiefs, and how many at a time he carried about with him. The rest of the band, too, did its share of swaying and surging, so that every now and then you might have fancied them on board ship, pitching and tossing in mid ocean. But none came up to the 'cello, as he called his bass, and he certainly contrived to make it conspicuous amidst the chorus of instruments.

They were a total of twelve or fourteen men, all married, but their wives did not go about with them, and only enjoyed the pleasure of their company for a month twice a year. Thus must they have revelled in a life of perpetual honeymoon: and perhaps—who knows?—were none the less happy in consequence.

Wet weeks always seem as if they would never come to an end, like long lanes without turning. But that wet week at Gastein did at last put forth signs of a break up. It was morning, about twelve o'clock, and the eccentric old lady first made the discovery. For some time she had been intently gazing from one of the windows looking southward; the strings of her nightcap had gradually become violently agitated, as if soft winds were playing at hide-and-seek in her brain and running out at her ears. Suddenly she clasped her hands tragically, in a manner peculiar to her people, and uttered a cry of "Der Himmel! der Himmel!" There was an instant rush towards the spot; then a confused murmur of voices which gradually grew louder; and then it was generally known that a small patch of blue was



UPPER WATERFALL.

discernible between and beyond the clouds ; just over the mountain called the Barometer.

One antiquated spinster of forty-five, with thin curls and a sharp, red nose, who happened to be seated next to me at the time, brought out a pencil and paper and proceeded to jot down a memorandum for her diary. She was evidently weak-sighted, and wrote in such large characters that it was impossible to pass them over.

“ For the first time for a whole week, a small portion of azure is visible in the celestial firmament. Oh joy ! Apparently we may now hope shortly for a cessation of the outpouring of the angry and watery elements of the upper regions. How vividly can I at this moment realize the emotions of Herr and Frau Noah ; when, sending forth for the third time the dove from the ark, she returned no more.”

Then she put back paper and pencil into her pocket, and threw upon the room at large a sigh and a gaze expressive of deep sentimentality.

But the small portion of azure in the celestial firmament proved no false prophet, no delusive

hope. The next morning rose bright and glowing. The roads, hitherto impassable, dried up as by magic ; walks were resumed. During this time I had not relaxed in my habit of early rising. No strict monk of the severest order could have more rigidly followed out the rules of his prison-house. And day after day the events to be recorded were the bath, the table-d'hôte, and the rain.

Though I seemed to derive but little benefit from the baths, they were nevertheless enjoyed and looked forward to ; and when after the seventh a day's rest was advised, it created a blank in the quiet life. Subsequent baths were but a repetition of the first. After each one of them there was the same light and buoyant feeling ; nought of languor or relaxation ; no inducement to sleep or heaviness. But the lightness and buoyancy would go off after a time, and leave one, not prostrated, but disinclined for all exertion. This appeared to be the result not of the baths, but of the warm, relaxing air ; an influence that everyone cannot battle with.

No doubt it affects people in different ways

according to their constitutions or maladies. To those suffering from want of strength or overwork, Gastein will give no immediate relief beyond the relief always yielded by perfect rest. Shut in so closely by mountains, there are times when they appear to weigh upon the spirit with strong oppression, and it seems an effort to draw breath. You pant to get beyond and above them; the eye wearies of its confined vision, and longs once more for a stretch of country over which it may roam with freedom. Perhaps as a last resource it looks upwards and gazes out into space, but there it has nothing to rest upon; nothing but the dazzling blue, which seems to recede, the more you try to fathom its limits.

In spite of its wild beauty, I caught myself many a time dwelling upon the moment when I should turn my back upon Gastein, and launch out once more into the world. No doubt, centuries ago, before it was known as a watering place, the primitive inhabitants of the valley must have thought it the end of creation, if they thought about such things at all. Such it verily appears to be, and is undoubtedly,

as far as the globe can be said to have an end.

A mile beyond Wild-bad-Gastein is Böckstein, and here the end comes. It consists of a few houses picturesquely jotted about, and a church, imposing for so small a place; a building of white stone, surmounted by a dome, that if it could take a walk hand in hand down Fleet Street, with that of St. Paul's, the two might pass muster for the extremes of dwarf and giant. It stands out in pleasant contrast with the background of green mountains: one of the latter a mountain of gold that for many years was worked and yielded a rich return. For three months in the year the people of Böckstein are deprived of the sun. On the first of February, Candlemas Eve, they all assemble in church, and at nine o'clock, during the ceremony, the first ray of the sun shoots down through a small window let in at the right spot in the roof for that purpose. This the people are taught to consider a miracle.

The first time I walked to Böckstein I paid the church a visit, and found the interior somewhat glittering; the dome covered with gaudy



LOWER WATERFALL.

paintings in which smart colours and a rather indelicate display of legs attracted the attention. On coming out I espied a path by the mountain side that seemed to promise a pleasant and short cut home. Pleasant it proved, but far from short. It led by the side of the river, which here is extremely narrow and of no depth : and goes rushing over stones and tiny rocks with a loud murmuring sound that gives it the effect of a small troubled sea. The path was a series of rough undulations, and by the time the end was in sight, I found myself knocked up with the unwonted exertion. As fate would have it, I met the doctor close to his villa, who soon discovered that for once his injunctions had been disregarded.

“Wrong,” he cried ; “very wrong. If you despise my counsels, I will have nothing to do with you.”

“I had no idea it was so far,” was all that could be urged by way of excuse. “The beauty of the day, the attractions of the walk, are insensibly alluring. But the air possesses something fatal to exertion.”

“For that reason I forbid it,” he replied. “Besides, the baths are trying to the strength, and if you will persist in taxing it during their progress, you will, as I have said before, leave Gastein worse than you found it. It is now nearly seven o’clock. I recommend you to go in and take a quiet tea.”

The quiet tea, to echo the doctor, consisted of a glass of milk, bread, butter, and honey. Nothing more. Tea and coffee he sternly prohibited. To-night, as soon as I entered, Marie came up with the tray. She was uncommonly fond of putting in an appearance upon the slightest pretext; and although apparently always brimful of work in a quiet way, would at any time desert her kitchens for a quarter of an hour’s gossip.

The social distance between masters and servants is not so strictly preserved in Germany as in England. To begin with, the latter as a class are more intelligent; they are better educated; and seldom show forth any great evidence of unrefinement to shock the senses. They are more poetical and romantic; expressions that may seem out of place, per-

haps, in connection with the humbler orders : but it is true to their inborn nature. Again, you may approach them familiarly, and they will not forget themselves, or thrust upon you undue familiarity in return. Marie, the doctor's housekeeper, was a superior woman of her class : a good, motherly kind of face, such as one likes to see flitting about a sick room : a little, gentle woman who trod softly, and did everything with noiseless ease : a woman without angles. We all know how unpleasant angles are in her sex.

Marie had voyaged a little and had a good deal to say concerning all she had seen. She had been to two or three theatres in her lifetime, and after the first one had gone nearly mad with excitement for a whole week. She had spent one season with the doctor at Nice, but the climate proved nearly fatal to her. He practised there every winter, and she remained in Gastein, taking her ease at the villa, or going out for a day's work by way of breaking the monotony. Marie was blessed with what the doctor called an acutely nervous organization, and could always foretell change of wea-

ther, especially in the matter of thunder. In this she was better than a barometer.

To-night she came up in her soft list slippers, and having set out the elaborate repast, pretended to be putting the chairs straight, though they were as orderly and proper as if they had not been moved for a hundred years.

“Any news, to-night, Marie?” I asked, by way of encouragement.

“None,” she said, abandoning on the spot the unoffending chairs. “Only that some people have been to look at the rooms and did not take them.”

The doctor had four sets of rooms, at any one’s disposal, but during the whole of our sojourn we had the house to ourselves: a luxury to be obtained only early or late in the season.

“Were you sorry?” said I, selfish enough to be glad on my own score.

“Yes, very,” replied Marie. “I like company. An empty house to me is like the grave. When I heard you were coming I danced for joy.”

“Yet we might have proved troublesome

customers," I remarked ; " and worked the flesh off your bones."

" There is but little to work off," she returned, laughing. Which was true. Marie would have made a sorry wife for an alderman. " Besides," she added, " I never think any amount of work a trouble for those who come here."

" Tell me a little of your history," I said. " How long have you been with the doctor ? "

" With the Herr doctor ! Nineteen years. Though some part of that time was spent with his good mother."

" Nineteen years !—almost half a lifetime. What changes you may have seen. Have you never been married ? "

" No," she answered, laughing, and blushing in a shame-faced sort of way.

" How is that ? "

" I don't know. We were ten children ; six brothers, all married ; four girls. But no man ever came for either one of us ; never once. I am ashamed to tell of it."

And Marie, to conceal her blushes and her shame, with another quiet laugh, fled from the room, and sought refuge in her own kitchen.

CHAPTER X.

AT THE TABLE-D'HÔTE.

EACH day now brought in a fresh influx of visitors. Carriages burdened with travellers and luggage, white with dust, would drive up to the hotel, the postboys cracking whips and blowing horns with a heartiness more real than pleasing. Gastein was getting crowded, and the table-d'hôte at Straubinger's overflowing. First the long table was filled up; then other tables, one after another, were brought in to the rescue, until at length there was room for no more.

The long table had not changed faces for some time, and it had been a daily source of occupation and amusement to watch the habits and manners of the people during the dinner hour. It is a matter for wonder and perplexity that the Germans, refined and polished in many things, should so many of them be

the exact opposite to this in their mode of eating. Few humble village cottages in England but could boast of manners at table as decent as these exhibited: manners, often creating a feeling of disgust over which time and familiarity had no softening influence.

The company at the long table was a motley group, varied enough. At the head, in right of senior visitor, sat a retired hotel-keeper from Vienna, who had come to Gastein for paralysis of the legs. His face was so set that the expression never once changed: not the faintest shadow of a smile ever passed over it; its thin dark features might have been carved in stone. He was wheeled about in a bath-chair, and two or three times a day would walk up and down the wandelbahn for twenty minutes, leaning on the arm of a servant whose face for ugliness might have rivalled the sphinx. The hotel-keeper had evidently retired upon his fortune, and was accompanied by his daughter; a loud girl, who gave herself an unlimited amount of airs, and walked about with a Grecian bend and dressed in the very extreme of fashion.

From his seat, the ex-inn-keeper could be seen down each side the table, with his stern, impenetrable, immovable expression, like a skeleton at a feast. His daughter graced his right hand; but, as I happened to be on that side also, some ten seats down, her charms were lost to me. First on the left came a little old man, thin and wiry, with a large stiff shirt collar, looking for all the world as if he had marched out of one of Dickens's books. I quite warmed towards him for his old-fashioned quaintness, his familiar, English appearance. But he was German to the back-bone; had never been in England, and never read Dickens. Next him sat a tall, lean, cadaverous looking object, conspicuous in a white neckcloth and large diamond studs. He was a Russian count, visiting Gastein for a weakness of the spine. This was not inconceivable, for the first day he rose from table it was startling to behold him; and when, at length, he stood erect, like a second Tower of Babel, he was a full head and shoulders above the next tallest man in the room. It would be a feat to record his name from memory, which seemed composed of about



INTERIOR OF A COTTAGE.

twenty-four consonants and two vowels. He was reported immensely rich; and if diamonds are any confirmation of such rumours, he might have been the Emperor of Russia himself. Diamonds flashed in his shirt; diamonds, emeralds, rubies, blazed on his fingers; his valet had been heard to affirm that he even wore diamond buckles to his garters; but no one was called upon to put faith in the unseen. The visible was enough.

Next in order came a man remarkably stout; so that had a contrast been planned, none more perfect or absurd could have been presented. The contrast also never seemed to become a matter to pass unnoticed; but each day, fresh and green, struck upon the senses of ridicule and mirth. Then came two ladies, mother and daughter, who invariably entered late, with a great amount of state, and a ceremonious crossing of the hands, that looked as if they felt themselves, like Mrs. Hominy, walking up the room to the admiration of all beholders, in a procession of two. The extent of bowing that had to be gone through before they finally composed themselves was a

serious interruption to dinner. Then came a fair young man—who would have been good looking but for a look of effeminacy—with whom the younger of the two ladies kept up a daily flirtation. He wore an eye-glass, which he had not the courage to use; and in this respect how happy would it be for some effeminate dandies did they but follow his example. He blushed every time he spoke, and fidgetted with his guard, so that possibly his particular complaint was nervousness. But, like almost everyone else there, in appearance he was the embodiment of health. The morning he went away, I caught sight of him in a corner of the diligence, which he had all to himself; and, with a polite bow to each other, we parted—perhaps for ever.

Next at the table came an amusing couple: a husband and wife, who had turned the hill of life, and were quietly and comfortably going downwards. But the lady had not by any means renounced the pomps and vanities of existence. Each day saw her in some fresh dress, fresh jewellery; and once or twice, when absent from her place, my neighbour whispered

to me that her maid must have failed at the last moment in accomplishing a new bit of finery. She was a stout, good-natured dame, with a countenance full and red, giving the impression of too much tightness of gown about the throat; an effect increased by a pair of eyes not perfectly straight, though sufficiently so not to be unpleasant. Her husband was thin and strong-looking, and it remained an unsolved problem which of the two was the invalid. He talked incessantly to his left-hand neighbour, now and then remembering his wife by helping her to wine, or vouchsafing a passing remark.

It would perhaps become tedious to record the peculiarities of the guests as each appeared in turn. Near me sat a small dark man who reminded me continually of one of the composers, though I never could quite make up my mind which of them. Beyond him came the bear and horror of the table: a slovenly attired man with a round head, an apple red, oily complexion, and prominent brown eyes most terribly out of the direct line: a large, sensual mouth, which took in of every dish at least four times the quantity of any one else

at the table, although its owner was positively as thin as a skeleton. His mode of eating was too coarse to contemplate ; but in this respect how few set him a worthy example !

Knives and forks were held any fashion. Now five or six pieces of meat would be cut, the knife be put down, the fork promoted to single duty. Now the fork would be abandoned, or rested alarmingly in the hand, teeth upwards, and the knife seized upon to do hard work amongst the peas and other vegetables. The plate cleared and perhaps mopped up with a piece of bread—knife and fork would be thrown into it carelessly, crossed, or at right angles, or with handles where the blades ought to be. Unlike many other places, here most people sent away their knives and forks, and had the felicity of getting some one else's in exchange, warm, and just wiped through with a towel. Between each course tooth-picks came into use, not for a moment, but during the whole period of waiting. The intervals are not short. The hotel people evidently wished to delude the minds of their guests with ideas of elaboration, and so made up

in time what was wanted in dishes. Sitting down at one o'clock, you rose up at half-past two. Often after waiting the usual quarter of an hour between each course, a dish would be handed round that more than half the room could not touch; and to avoid the awkwardness of the pause, and to satisfy the cravings of hunger, the majority would break bread and sip wine. Here, if anywhere, to quote an old saying from the Borderland, was it possible to find the "grunds o' your stamick," though certainly without being any the better for it.

Vain and delusive was the idea that as visitors increased the dinners would improve. Rather, was the progress of a backward tendency. This probably was one reason why Herr Straubinger was as difficult to catch sight of as the Empress of China; another reason of course being to keep wisely out of the way of complaints. The fortune he is making must be fabulous as that of a Pacha with two tails, or a Mandarin with nine buttons. He holds there somewhat the position of a despotic monarch, and can make or mar his own laws.

Mutton, to be faithful in small chronicles, was never brought to the table. Whether sheep were scarce or only unpopular, was a matter shrouded in mystery ; but during the whole of my wanderings in the Tyrol, the number of sheep seen might easily have been counted on one hand. The poor cows, on the contrary, were numerous, and frightfully thin : and kept up so incessant a tintamarre with their crazy, battered-out tin bells, that nervously inclined persons were driven wild with pity for the unhappy beasts, and excusable rage in themselves.

Absence of all animals was a feature in Gastein. No cat choruses at night. Cats were almost unknown : and dogs nearly so. The few were so frightfully ugly—long, thin, unshapely bodies, shaven of every vestige of hair, the end of the tail, the head, and the paws excepted—that they might have been taken for guardians of some infernal region. It is possible that cats, who are said to be nervous animals, found their health affected by the climate, and the perpetual vapours arising from the waters.

These vapours indeed were bad, not for the cats only, who wisely kept away, but for many human beings who, less wise, do not exercise a like discretion. Many a wife, for example, in good health, accompanying her husband, falls ill during her stay at Gastein. There are numberless people upon whom it acts almost as a poison. Carrying out the idea, it is easy to believe that for others, and in certain specified maladies, it is equally beneficial. The fact of so many falling ill there proves that the place undoubtedly possesses certain powers. The chief reason for this indisposition is that the vapours rising from the baths and hot springs are inhaled: and these, restoring to health those who stand in need of them, have in opposite cases a contrary effect. They who assert that the Gastein waters contain no special virtue above ordinary waters, will find this a strong witness against them.

The amount of evaporation in Gastein is so great that the process is always going on; and when the earth has become dry and parched for want of rain, the springs and waterfalls come in to the rescue. Many a

time in the early morning, between five and six o'clock, I have watched the sun drawing up the spray from the waterfall. Gradually ascending, it first became a mist, and then a cloud, which so spread and increased that the whole mountain side was concealed by it. A strange sight, never witnessed elsewhere by me, perhaps for want of opportunity; and never seen at a later hour of the day. A sight curious and almost weirdlike, to note the spray change gradually to mist and vapour, and then to the thicker cloud: to watch the process ascending slowly, and transforming itself as if under the influence of a wand held by some unseen spirit of the air: increasing from the small rainbow-like streak until it became large enough to envelop the mountain as in a huge white shroud. Then, attracted by the mountains, it would linger lovingly about them, entwining them, as it were, in a fond, sisterly embrace; whispering to them the close, mysterious connection existing between mountain and mist; between land and water; between earth and heaven; in a word between the Creator and the created. Then gradually it

would roll and roll away and disperse, and lose itself in the deep blue of the sky, which here seems so high and clear, as to be the very quickening of the word ethereal.

The soul amidst such scenes feels its power; and with a force they cannot quite possess, even amidst the echoing aisles and fretted vaults of a temple, the grand words of the canticle whisper themselves:—

“ Oh, all ye works of the LORD, bless ye the LORD: praise Him and magnify Him for ever !

“ Oh, ye winds of GOD, bless ye the LORD : praise Him and magnify Him for ever !

“ Oh, ye mountains and hills, bless ye the LORD : praise Him and magnify Him for ever !”

Though the air of Gastein is not bracing, none can deny its purity. It possesses something that makes itself felt, almost speaking to you in words : something soothing and delicious to the senses, that stills the nerves and rests the brain ; suspending all powers of exertion, but breathing-in an intoxicating sense of life.

“ Could you but go up naked into the woods,”

remarked the doctor one day, "after the bath, and in that state take the air, you would feel life creeping into your veins, all your muscles hardening, and weakness giving place to strength."

"Why, then, don't you organize something of the sort?" I returned. "Why not have a place set apart for this purpose, where your patients, protected by a linen gown, might receive the benefit of this wonderful air?"

"It would never do," replied the doctor, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head. "We should acquire a reputation for cannibalism; be called savages; the world would come down upon us with self-righteous fury. So for the sake of an idea, my patients must renounce one of the best means of restoring them to health. In Gastein it would have a double and treble effect, for the baths open the pores of the skin, and render them peculiarly susceptible to all atmospheric influences."

"Is this your reason for making your patients lie down after every bath?"

"It is one of them. You then get all the air possible, though in a modified form. Before

reaching your room, it has, figuratively speaking, passed through a number of strainers, only that it has become less, and not more, refined by the process."

"What other reasons have you?"

"Rest, for one thing. Rest to body and mind. Want of rest is the cause of half the existing maladies. Men do too much now-a-days. Those who have work don't know how or where to stop. Those who have none, but live an idle life, use up their strength in gaiety and dissipation. It is impossible to be moderate in this age. Hence the reason that brain-power is diminishing."

There was a good deal, doubtless, in these views; but the doctor himself was an example of doing too much work rather than too little. He appeared to be in all places at the same time. If you wanted him you had but to take up your station in any part of Gastein, and before five minutes had expired, you would certainly catch sight of the coat and yellow umbrella flying round the corner, or darting off at right angles; and then you might fly after him, and take your chance of catching him.

CHAPTER XI.

UNDER THE MOONBEAMS.

ONE night the doctor came up to point out from the balcony the effect of the landscape in the light of a full moon. The moon, that night, was unusually brilliant, the stars bright and flashing, seeming far higher and larger than they appear in our heavier English atmosphere. Here veritably the moon reigned Queen of Night, shedding her gentle beams upon all creation. The sight was indeed a rare one: never to pass out of memory. All the wildness and grandeur of the place was before us, softened but not concealed by the pale silvery light. The mountains loomed forth in dense, black masses, their shapes distinctly outlined, greater and more solemn than under the broad, strong sunshine. Here and there the village houses stood out, small and white. The snow, visible only from the ponderous gold mountain to the right, gleamed and sparkled as if fairies

were in possession, preparing for the revels of a midnight banquet. What would it be to be amongst them at this witching hour; to look down upon the world from the great mountain, and watch the play of the moonbeams upon the hundred glaciers! Here and there the shadows of the slopes were deep, and the woods looked black as Erebus; so dense and ghostly that each moment you fancied to behold a phantom group come issuing from its shades with noiseless tread and pace sepulchral.

The village lay before us in repose; a few lights gleaming from windows as sole signal of life. No sound to break the tomb-like stillness but that of the mighty torrent, with its constant, eternal roar: unceasing for centuries past, and for aught we know, for centuries to come. Its white mass of water shone out in the moonlight, and the spray could be seen distinctly ascending, catching the beams upon its numberless particles, and reflecting them in the varied colours of the rainbow. It was a scene of enchantment; and those who gazed might fancy themselves genii of the night, for no other living sound, no other living being, was evident.

The silver thread of the snow ran down the gold mountain until lost by the intervening hill. Here and there an odd, solitary tree stood out upon the summit, stretching forth its branches like some weird, skeleton demon, issuing forth its spells upon a sleeping world. Often as I had gazed upon the scene by day, much as I had grown to love it, its effect upon the imagination was as nothing compared with the impression of this moonlit, starlit night.

“How glorious!” one of us exclaimed, after a long silence given to varied emotions. “And yet how unearthly!”

“Glorious indeed!” replied the doctor. “Perhaps because so unearthly. A scene with which I cannot grow familiar; it strikes upon me always with fresh solemnity. Now you are able to realise the extreme wildness of Gastein. There is scarcely another spot like it in the world.”

“I know of none,” answered I. “It makes me feel very far out of the world. How Schiller would have revelled in this!”

The remark was called forth by an arbour on the opposite mountain which had been

erected years ago and called after the poet. The previous day the doctor had adorned the front of the harbour with a white bust of Schiller: and so strong was the light that we fancied we could just see the white speck gleaming out from its dark background. He had crowned the forehead with a wreath of laurel-leaves brought by him from Italy; and having some acquaintance with Schiller's daughter, had that day written her an account of what he had done. He pointed out her likeness in his album; the portrait of a lady who was no longer young but who in youth must have been good and pleasant looking. The expression of her face, adorned by white hair and a calm looking cap, was noble and sedate. She had inherited a little talent from her father, but not sufficient to make her known to the world.

He gave me that evening a photograph of Rückert, received from the poet himself; who, in the doctor's opinion, possessed one of the greatest imaginations Germany ever produced. On the back of it he wrote one of Rückert's verses, and one of his favourite mottoes; which the poet had not only written but carried

out through life. The face was evidence of the assertion: beautiful with a beauty seen only in such natures.

“Das ist der Zauberbahn, womit Du Alles stillst :
Wolle nur was Du sollst, so kannst Du was Du willst.”*

The doctor had known many of the great men of Germany in his time, and amongst them that brightest of spirits—Mendelssohn.

We gazed long at the scene before us; until the moon was high in the heavens, and we chilly with the night air; then turned into the house, and at once into another world.

The following evening I was seated quietly enjoying tea, and deep in the pages of a book, when there suddenly occurred a slight commotion in the passage outside. Then the door was stealthily unlatched, and sounds of an unknown music vibrated through the room. Listening for a moment I tried to recognize the instrument, but in vain. It was neither like the violin nor the harp, and yet somewhat resembled both. At last I thought of the zither, of which I had heard so much: the

* “This is the magical spell, with which you all may still :
Only will what you ought, and you may do what you will.”

instrument the Tyrolese peasantry handle with so much skill. I went to the door and there sat Sebastian, the houseman, as he was called, his face a broad ripple of smiles, his zither before him on a table.

He was doing his best to draw forth sweet sounds from the strings, but the instrument was old and crazy, and had been untouched for years. Sebastian was a fine type of the peasantry; a handsome, well made man, with iron-grey hair, and a sparkle still in his eye. In his younger days he had been expert with the instrument; foremost in the dance; but, as he said, he and his zither had alike grown old: they had had their day: his fingers were stiff and the strings rotten. But having heard that I was fond of music, with that kindly spirit so innate in the Tyrolese, he had plucked up courage, and drawn forth his zither from its long abode—its many years' tomb.

He endeavoured to play out a few airs, and some of the dances still lurking in his mind since the days of his youth, when he was chief dancer amongst them; and managed to give an idea of what the instrument in charmed hands

might be capable of producing. Every tune had its story. His stock exhausted, he jumped up, and with a shake of the head at his zither, and a mutter that it was time he and his instrument were out of the way, he abruptly disappeared.

Later on, I obtained a better idea of its capabilities. I was speaking about it one morning to the doctor, and asking his opinion of the instrument.

“The zither!” he replied: “there is but one thought about it. If you want to be scientific, go to Beethoven: but if you are seeking music to touch the heart and draw tears from the eyes, listen to the zither.”

“Can so simple an instrument do this?” I asked.

“Yes; by virtue of its simplicity. The most simple things come nearest home to us. There is a watchmaker lives in Gastein during the season: to hear him play the zither is a treat to be remembered. I will get him to come in some evening.”

By reason of which, a few nights further on, about eight o'clock, a small ceremonious tap

at the door ushered in the "Zitherman." He bowed profoundly on first appearing, and again in the middle of the room, with an amount of dignity that would have graced a court. He was tall, good-looking, and superior to his station: had a mind well cultivated: had read much, and was evidently of a romantic turn. But it was impossible to determine whether he was perfectly unconscious of self, or very much the opposite.

Having thoroughly ascertained that he was not intruding, he sat down and placed his instrument before him. Then he began to play; and with the first notes poor Sebastian's attempt passed out of memory. The doctor had not overrated its heart-touching powers. The melody was exquisite. The clockmaker possessed a good deal of expression: his nature was refined, and he threw it into his playing. That he loved music was evident. His occupation, too, had probably caused his fingers to be sensitive and delicate of touch. He played many airs, mingling the grave with the gay; but throughout his face was immovable. It was strangely pleasant to sit and listen to him,

and what the doctor called his unscientific performance. The Tyrolese airs came out in perfection, and with this at their command, their universal love for the art is easily interpreted.

An hour passed quickly under the magic influence. Then the watchmaker got up, and with two more elaborate bows, departed. Several nights after that, when time permitted, he came in and whiled away the moments with his soft sweet melodies.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RED FLAG.

MOST of the visitors in Gastein are ordered to take nineteen baths; a few patients here and there taking one or two more or less. This was the number the doctor prescribed for me: and after the seventh and fourteenth, a day's interval. On these two days I drank the waters as they came up warm from the springs, and the doctor was urgent in not allowing them to be touched at any other time. Some people, he said, persisted in taking the baths and drinking the waters together, and so mixed up the treatment that it was impossible to say what did them good and what not. The water was tasteless. Its chief virtue probably lies in the large amount of electricity it contains: a property that does not diminish with time. Gastein water may be exported to any part of Europe, and at the end of six or

twelve months will still retain its healing powers.

The doctor called me into his dampfbad as I was passing it one morning, and began experiments with the water and an electrical machine. First he brought forward some ordinary water and applied the battery. The needle was motionless. Next he took a bottle of water obtained from one of the well-known Spas of Germany. The needle moved, but slightly. Then he had some water brought in from the adjoining spring, and the needle under its influence moved considerably: proving it to be highly charged. Lastly he took a bottle of Gastein water a year old, and the needle with the old water moved as powerfully as it had done with the new.

“Thus you see,” concluded he, “how eminently it is adapted for exportation. Neither time, nor land, nor sea-voyage, deprives it of its properties. Now let me show you my vapour bath.”

We went into another room, where were various ingenious contrivances for the application of the vapour. Tubes for the mouth and

ears ; a peculiar arrangement for the knees and feet ; another where there existed affections of the spine. The vapour rushes up hot and hissing from various apertures, and after a short time I was unable to bear their strength. I left the room with a singing in the ears that for an hour afterwards almost deafened me.

“ Here,” said the doctor, “ you get the utmost power of the springs. By this means the properties of the waters are administered to the patient in a condensed form.”

“ Are they useful in every kind of complaint ? ” I asked.

“ All those complaints for which Gastein is noted. You already know the catalogue does not embrace every ill flesh is heir to. The waters are only of use to those suffering from affections of the spine, nerves, and head: for this class of maladies there is perhaps no such cure in the world. The vapour baths are also good for affections of the throat. Some of our best singers have come here, and left again with their voices completely restored.”

“ A pity Gastein is not more known,” I remarked.

“It will be known well enough one day. Gastein is yet in its infancy; its fame lies in the future. It has had much to contend against—great difficulty of access to begin with. But railways are approaching: a few years and it will be as celebrated as the other watering-places of Germany.”

“And then it will be no longer Gastein.”

“Ah, my dear sir, we must be philanthropic. The good of mankind demands sacrifices; fame has its taxes. The waters are inexhaustible; the springs will bubble up to the end of time. As there is enough for all the world, let all the world come—such, at least, as stand in need of its healing powers.”

“Still it is a hard matter to pay such a price for the inroads of so-called civilization: a fatal consequence, I suppose you will say, of man’s first disobedience. *He* sinned: not the earth, created in beauty and harmony. Where man has not trod, the Almighty reveals himself in all the majesty and marvel of creation. Where man passes, he leaves behind him traces of his fallen nature.”

“Gastein will always, to a great extent,

remain what it now is," replied the doctor. "Its main characteristics cannot be altered. Civilization will never remove its mountains, or turn aside the course of that superb waterfall. Contracted and shut in, and as it were, apart from the world, what Gastein now is, that it will pretty well for ever remain."

"Perhaps so," I said. "Especially as it is certain that you will never possess a railway to the place itself. That beautiful Valley of Gastein, with its wonderful pass, so terribly grand, will never submit to the ravages of steam and iron."

"I think," said the doctor, turning the subject, "I have never shown you the original source of the waters: where their existence was first discovered. Let us go to it now."

We went out, and began descending the steep hill which led to the bed of the valley. The waterfall, dashing and winding along, could be seen for a considerable distance, twisting about like a huge serpent. At the very bottom, in a small sheltered nook, within reach of the spray of the torrent, stood a small pool of water, its surface bubbling.

“Here,” said the doctor, “the first spring was discovered. Here the poor stag was found, bathing its wounds. You see the bubbles rising. No one has ever been able to find out the holes or fissures whence they escape.”

The water felt warm and pleasant. It was very easy to imagine that upon a wound it would have a soothing influence.

“You are right,” said the doctor in answer to the remark. “In such cases Gastein is unrivalled. For weakness resulting from wounds or loss of blood, it is excellent. You have observed that large pond in front of the wandelbahn—it is for horses. A horse, tired with a long journey, enters it, and comes out again refreshed and ready for more work. But if he goes in too often, and stays in too long, he becomes weak and good for nothing. They are perverse animals. It is difficult to get them into the water; but once in, it is difficult to get them out again. I have often taken a mineral bath after great bodily fatigue, and come out from it active and refreshed.”

“Then you, too, have taken the baths?”

“Indeed, yes. We all do foolish things

sometimes in our lives, and this was one of mine. I took them, once, day after day, day after day, until I was almost paralyzed. Now I never take them until the season here is over, just before starting for Nice. Active exertion taken in conjunction with the baths would in time kill the strongest man."

Where we were standing, perhaps more than in any other spot, it was possible to realize the wild beauty of Gastein. The ravine was so contracted that now its sides seemed about to meet and close over. We were at the foot of the great mass of falling water, and could trace its course far above us, a huge body of boiling, surging, down-dashing foam: its spray flying around; each particle, said the doctor, holding a grain of sand; its roar so deafening that we had to shout to each other as men shout amidst the crash of machinery. Its rapid but more silent course could be traced, as it sped on to the lower valley. The mountains from this point naturally seemed higher and grander than I had yet seen them. Anything more wild than this aspect of Gastein could scarcely be conceived for a place inhabited and

civilized. At hand stood a mill, the wheel turned by the water in its course. The miller came out for a moment, took a calm look at us, nodded to the doctor, and disappeared again to his work, bestowing not so much as a glance or thought upon the surrounding beauty which seemed to be drawn in with every breath. Familiarity breeds contempt: things of every day existence men first of all grow accustomed to, and then cease to care for. It would be a different world, perhaps, did this familiarity not blind them to all the beauties of their common lives.

Above us were the few houses composing the village; though Gastein so little resembles an ordinary village that the term seems out of place. In front stretched the long wandelbahn, Straubinger's at its extremity rising up as if to defy the waterfall, which washed its sides in its progress. The Straubingers could boast an ancestry. For three centuries and a corresponding amount of generations, their fathers had held sway in Gastein: a pedigree to which a great many grand people possessing arms, and crests, and mottoes, and escutcheons, and

family relics, and old plate, and ancient histories, cannot lay claim. But they had never aspired to anything beyond the dignity of inn-keepers. All of them had been born in a small cottage; the chief inn until the new grand building rose by degrees, and created a sort of revolution in the place. The old cottage had been pulled down; but Straubinger, clinging with fond memory to the room in which they had first seen daylight, saved it from ruin, and built other rooms about it.

To the left, perched in the distance, was the Schiller-höhe, the poet's bust standing out, crowned with the dry laurel leaves of Italy. The doctor glanced at his work with satisfaction seeming to think it a bright idea on his part. The leaves, brought from the sunny south, he knew not why, had been adapted to the most appropriate of uses. His own villa from this point looked up in the clouds: perched behind the Solitude boarding-house, it seemed to keep watch over it with the eyes of Argus.

Suddenly as we were looking at the villa, a small red flag appeared at one of the windows,

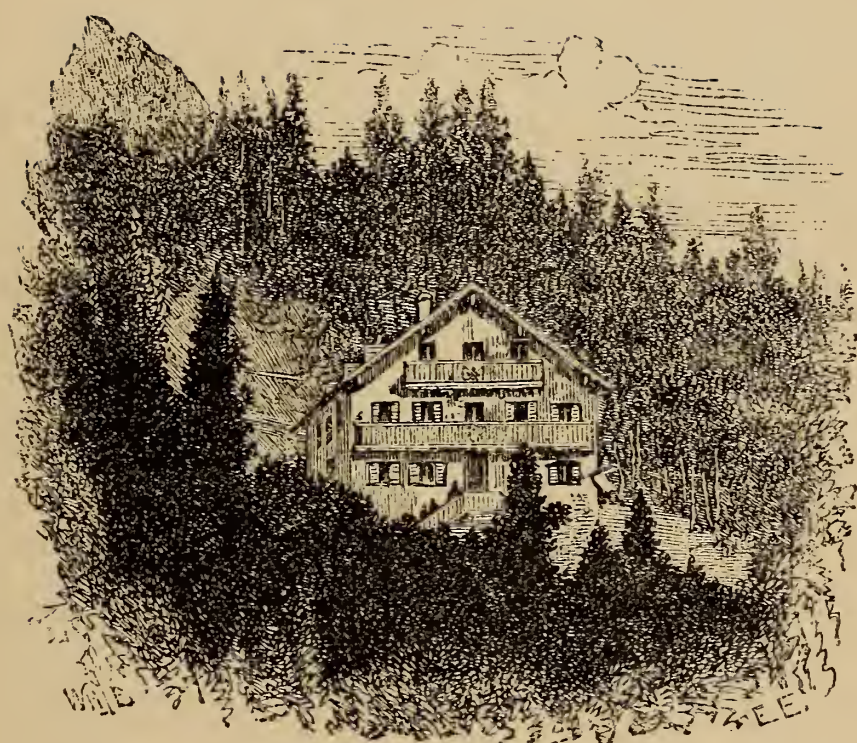
and remained flying in the breeze: a signal for the doctor. Amongst other things he had established this telegraph, as he called it, between his house and the dampfbad, which, at opposite extremities of the village, were in view of each other. If the red flag appeared at the window of his consulting room, down posted one of his servants to ascertain what was wanted; if it appeared at the villa, up went the doctor on the same errand.

“You know,” said he, pointing to the signal, “they cannot always tell where to find me.”

It was impossible not to laugh at the idea suggested. The doctor looked up in surprise. Had he spoken bad English?

“Excellent English,” I returned. “But your remark brings to mind how difficult it is for any one to lay hands on you. Easier does it seem to catch a will-o’-the-wisp.”

“I have so much to do,” he said, as if in apology. “For two moments together I cannot be certain of myself. Take yesterday, for example. Two of your compatriotes were arriving; two charming ladies; and I went out to meet them as far as the Café Vergiss-



THE DOCTOR'S HOUSE.

meinnicht. You see I thought a welcome would cheer them up. Would you believe the trouble they gave me !”

“What trouble ?” I asked, as he paused.

“This trouble. A fortnight ago they write me word they are coming to Gastein, and I must engage rooms for them. I did so. Four days ago they write me word their plans are altered and they are not coming. So I pay twenty gulden for the rooms and give them up. Yesterday they write me word that they have returned to their former plans and are coming ; will I keep the rooms ? But if it is permitted to ladies to change their minds, it is also permitted to inn-keepers to let their apartments.”

“The rooms were gone, I suppose ?”

“As soon as I get this letter from these charming but changeable ladies, I rush off to the Hirsch and find the rooms occupied ; let but an hour before to a Russian countess, who engaged them because they are quiet and she could take the air without being stared at. So yesterday I meet these ladies and say, ‘My dear ladies, I am delighted to welcome you

once more to my beloved Gastein, but your rooms are no more.' Well, we went all over the place, and they could find nothing to their mind. Twenty-five rooms in the Hirsch, but—would you credit it?—every one sans stuffs."

"Without what?" I cried, puzzled.

"Stuffs, my dear sir; stuffs; not one with stuffs, you know."

"But I don't know," I returned, unable to guess at his meaning. "Twenty-five rooms and all unfurnished?"

"No, no," exclaimed the doctor. "Chairs, tables, and beds in abundance, but no stuffs. You see, the ladies not being in good health, are often cold, and require a fire."

"Oh!" cried I, bursting into laughter, as light dawned. "You mean stoves. The rooms were stoveless."

"Stoves, then," replied the doctor, repeating the word correctly. "What did I say to make you laugh so?"

"Where did you finally leave the ladies?" I asked, passing over his question.

"At the Solitude. And there they are comfortably settled. I wonder what is going on

at my villa," he added, pointing to the flag that was still flying. "An invasion, perhaps."

"Some more goats, for instance, and no Don Quixote to frighten them away."

"I doubt that," he laughed. "But let us go and see. Have you aught to do in particular?"

"What a question in Gastein! And from you to a patient. I wish I could say yes; but, alas, it is always no."

"Then we will together find out whether this signal is not much ado about nothing."

Reascending the rugged hill-side, we were soon in the road. Past the only shop the place could boast of, for all visible sign of another; where everything but bread and meat was sold: past the solitary apothecary's, who dispensed his pills and black draughts from the first floor of an old house. He was scarcely ever in, that apothecary. A perpetual placard was suspended from the handle of the door announcing that he was at the Hirsch, where he was in the habit of taking his meals; so that at last I came to the conclusion that he

spent most of his time in eating and drinking. Yet how thin he was ! A pale, hollow face ; a bushel of light yellow hair that stood on end as if it had once been electrified and never recovered the shock ; clothes that appeared to contain nothing but a pair of broad shoulders and long, lean legs, absolutely repudiating the notion of such a thing as a stomach. His temperament was decidedly phlegmatic ; he worked in a calm, deliberate manner, thinking it best perhaps to be slow and sure ; though he never gave you the idea that he thought of anything : except, perhaps, the Hirsch and its larder.

Past the pharmacy we journeyed : past Straubinger's, and through the wandelbahn, where we loitered for a moment's chat with the library woman ; out again into the open, and in sight of the villa. The red flag had disappeared. The doctor rubbed his eyes.

"It certainly was there," cried he. "I don't think it was fancy. You saw it?"

"Undoubtedly. We both saw it. Marie has perhaps lost patience and taken it in."

We went on, and no sooner appeared on the

steps than out rushed Marie, her hands raised in dismay.

“ Marie,” cried the doctor, “ whence this inconsistency. What made you show the signal and then withdraw it ?”

“ Why had she shown the signal? Because the Herr Doctor’s dinner was getting cold, and she wondered why he did not arrive to eat it. But when the damage was done and the dinner frozen, she took it in again. He might then come when it pleased him.”

We looked at each other in dismay. No thought of dinner had occurred to either. The table-d’hôte hour had long passed. There remained but to make the best of it. The doctor hastened in to his neglected meal, and I went back to Straubinger’s at a quicker pace than usual; determined for once to be thankful for small mercies.

CHAPTER XIII.

A VILLAGE PROCESSION.

THE days went on, and our stay was drawing to a close. I had originally started for Gastein with the intention of remaining there three months; but this was found to be not only unnecessary, but sheerly impossible. So long as the baths had to be taken, there was an object in view: and it is a satisfaction to go through with an undertaking: but the baths at an end, I felt that for me Gastein would be at an end also. It has been mentioned that I took nineteen baths; and the two last were comparative failures. I had had enough; as much, to quote the doctor, as the system would receive.

Then I ceased. The doctor advised, nay insisted upon, a week's absolute rest and quiet;

when I proposed going away the very next morning, he threatened to put me under lock and key. So rather than bear imprisonment I yielded; and he shook me vigorously by the hand, and called me a tractable patient.

“But how do you feel?” quoth he. “What are your sensations, now the baths have ceased?”

“Not at all uncommon,” I replied, “as far as I can make them out. I feel very much as I did when I began; if anything, perhaps a little weaker.”

“So much the better. You will be all the stronger by and by, and will derive permanent benefit from the cure. I am glad you are staying; to-morrow is a grand day with us.”

“For what reason?” I asked. “Are you going to be married?”

“No, no,” he cried, laughing. “I am a sincere admirer of the fair sex; the world without the ladies would indeed be a barbarous and uncivilized state of existence; but I have no time to prove my devotion by a marriage. My profession is my wife, and I assure you I often find her as much as my two hands can

manage. Do you mean to say that my faithful but gossiping Marie does not post you up in all the news of the place?"

"For once she seems to have failed. I had no idea that to-morrow was more than any other day. What makes it so?"

"Well, then—but it is a very small matter after all—to-morrow is our Fête-Dieu; and it will be celebrated with a grand procession."

"Is that all?" cried I. "I have seen processions without number in the large Roman Catholic towns of France and Germany, with all the gold and glitter of wealth about them; and I am heartily tired of the show."

"Possibly. But processions in your large towns, and processions here in Gastein are very distinct things. To see the pageant winding about the mountains: the girls in white; the priests in their gay vestments; the gorgeous banners swaying in the wind; the glittering etceteras: is an object unusual and picturesque. Should to-morrow prove a fine day, you ought not to miss it."

The morrow dawned bright and glowing. At ten o'clock a gun was fired from a cliff in

one of the rocks, and the sound went echoing through hill and vale. The procession was on the move; and during the whole ceremony the gun continued to be discharged at intervals.

It was, as the doctor observed, a simple matter, after all; a quiet show. To one brought up in great Roman Catholic towns, familiar with processions in all their gorgeous pomp and magnificence, the simplicity here seemed a great contrast. But it precisely suited the character of the village; anything more elaborate would have been out of harmony with the scene. As the procession went winding along, now up in the hills, now down in the valley; standing out conspicuously amidst the green; girls and women, men and boys, all quietly but artistically dressed; it could but be admitted that the show possessed a charm beyond the power of wealth and city to bestow. The whole village seemed to take part in the ceremony; it was a mystery where the inhabitants came from; and after they had dispersed most of them were no more seen. All who took no other part in the procession

assisted as spectators ; making the most of the short and simple annals of their existence. The visitors were most of them new arrivals ; just a few old faces loomed out here and there, with whom I shared the feelings of an ancient inhabitant.

Last in the procession came the priests, supported by a brass band in the rear : a grand band, its music well sounding. Notes that might have been harsh ; harmony that now and then might have been slightly discordant ; time, that in an orchestra might possibly have created some slight confusion ; all was passed over. The hills took up the melody, and the multiplied echoes accounted for everything. The priests themselves were plainly robed ; either not caring for the rich vestments of the Romish Church, or unable to afford them. Indeed it is difficult to see what purpose they would have served, the minds of the peasantry being far too unsophisticated to be much impressed, or influenced, by those outward and visible signs of wealth and pomp which the great world worships. Most of these simple villagers had never been ten miles beyond

their birthplace; never seen anything resembling a town; never had other occupation than tending of cattle, combined with such work as the mountains yield. Rich, gaily dressed visitors from the high places of the earth, it is true, frequented Gastein in the season, but the peasants, absent in their hills and huts, saw little of them. The visitors, moreover, only appeared in certain frequented spots, at given times; long walks were forbidden: and in fact each clustered together in small colonies and groups, like seeking like.

With their simplicity, religious feeling and reverence is strongly developed in the Tyrolese: men and women. If by chance I risked my life by venturing upon a drive in one of the little one-horse conveyances: which all looked as if they had come out of Noah's Ark, and had since been undergoing a sentence of perpetual hard labour: the coachman never passed any of the roadside crucifixes without baring his head. I never found one who failed to prove his sense and recognition of religion by this outward token of respect. At a first glance it may be thought a trifling matter, but scarcely

so when it is remembered that it was of daily and oft-repeated occurrence. Easy enough to do, perhaps, but easier still to leave undone. To any Englishman, accustomed to meet with very little of this reverence in his own country, it could not pass unobserved. Shut up within themselves; seldom demonstrative except perhaps where demonstration might as well not be; many lessons might be taken to heart and mind from these simple, far-off, out-of-the-world mountain folk.

But the procession is passing out of sight: it is winding back to the church through the path overlooking that wonderful valley: the voices are dying in the air, faint and fainter yet, with a stage-like effect that appeals to the senses; a few more guns, and the last is fired. The church has swallowed up the show and ceremonial.

I happened to be close to Straubinger's when two of the maidens returned in their smart clothes. Out rushed some of the women on the watch for them, spread carpets and aprons over the wooden bridge leading to the lower regions, where the artistic cook held reign, and erected

an impromptu triumphal arch of brooms and mops and other domestic weapons. The girls were hoisted in amidst blushes and shrieks of laughter: planning, doubtless, in their own minds, speedy and ample revenge, for this mockery of state.

When all was over the visitors dispersed, not sorry to take refuge from the blazing sunshine. It had been a splendid morning, but no sooner had the procession disappeared than a dark bank of clouds came up from the East and rain began to fall. The shower sent the people like snails into their houses, and in a short time the scene had changed to the *table-d'hôte*. The dinner was neither worse nor better than usual. The chief topic of conversation was the event of the morning: how fortunate it was there had been no rain; how strange it should have come so soon after; inquiries as to whether any one had felt any ill-effect from the unwonted exposure to the sunbeams, and a unanimous agreement that no one had given the matter a thought. The conversation being so general and interesting, war with the toothpicks was waged less fiercely than usual; but it was

delayed, not dismissed; for when the company dispersed, the offending quills were carried off in triumph.

“ Well,” said the doctor, coming up that afternoon into the harbour, where I was sitting over an old volume of “ Bleak House,” “ what think you of the procession ?”

“ Very good,” I answered, closing the book, and leaving the unlucky little Jellaby with his head one side the area-railings and his body the other. “ Better than we might expect from Gastein.”

“ We have our resources on occasion,” replied the doctor, humorously. “ Then you enjoyed it almost as much as those of your fine large towns ?”

“ More so.”

“ I told you. There is a simplicity about this which comes home to us. Here you find man more as he was first created; noble, generous, untutored; in the midst of a beautiful and as yet unspoiled earth.”

“ And you think that man and his actions must be in accordance.”

“ Undoubtedly. You do not meet with con-

traditions in nature. If a man is good he will show himself good; if he is bad, this too will soon become evident. I am glad you were here for the show; though a small matter, it is as well to see everything."

"I also am glad. Everything about Gastein pleases me. I quite agree with you that the nature of the peasantry is simple and noble. I hope it will remain so."

"I think it will," replied the doctor.

"It is not improbable," I returned. "They are, on the one hand, too far removed from the world to be under the influence of civilization and its penalties: on the other hand their little world is of beauty so great that it must continually act upon them for good. I am sorry to leave it all."

The doctor shook his head. "It is nothing but coming and going, coming and going. This, situated as I am, is one of the great drawbacks of my profession. If I become attached to a patient—it happens now and then—no sooner do I begin to take pleasure in his society, and feel that I am getting to know him, than away he goes, and perhaps I see him no more. What are

those lines of one of your poets ?—‘ I never taught a dear gazelle, to’—to—what is the rest?’”

“ Watch me with its coal-black eye,
But when it came to know me well
And love me, it was sure to die—”

I quoted, ending the verse for him.

“ Hem !” he cried. “ My patients don’t die, happily for them and me ; but they go away, perhaps for ever. So to me it is like death. You are laughing—think me sentimental. Is it true Englishmen are so very unromantic ?”

“ I don’t know much about it. If they possess the virtue, I fancy they carefully bottle it up out of sight.”

“ And do you approve ?”

“ Je n’en sais rien.”

“ Do you not like the Germans better than the English ?”

“ Can you ask me to bear witness against my own flesh and blood ?”

“ Bear witness to the truth,” cried the doctor, firing up theatrically. “ I press for an answer.”

“ Without making comparisons, I like the

Germans much. My experience has been chiefly amongst the Saxons; I have met with more kindness and hospitality from them than from any other people in the world. But my world is limited."

"They are a fine race," said the doctor. "Have you seen Schiller's little house near Leipzig?"

"Many a time. And many a time dived into Auerbach's keller, where Goethe placed some of his scenes in Faust."

"Ah! ah! What a man he was! But to me Schiller's life has always borne a deeper interest. There is so much sadness about it; so much romance; and yet so much hard-working reality. I am quite proud of my bust over there at the Schiller-Höhe."

He took up some glasses on the arbour table and looked across. I could just manage to see the head and laurel wreath.

"Your eyes are younger than mine," cried the doctor. "There is one thing the baths of Gastein cannot do: when we get old they cannot make us young again. Here as elsewhere the seven stages of man creep on."

“But are they not longer stages?”

“I don't know. Many live to a great age; many keep young in a marvellous manner; but many also—especially the women—get old all at once. This year they will be still young, vigorous, active; the next, shrivelled, shrunken, old.”

“Their lives are spent in such hard work,” I remarked. “It is healthy, but tells in the end.”

“Ay! that and the want of good animal food. The rich can only get it from afar; the poor must do without it altogether.”

“Yet how healthy the peasants look. Handsome, well made, stalwart.”

“They are so. Their beauty and manliness are hereditary. Healthy they cannot help being. Simple lives such as theirs, passed in the open air, simple occupations, could produce no other result. But when we grow old we require more care and nourishment; and many for want of it pass quickly into the sere and yellow leaf.”

“Perhaps they are as well without it,” I said. “Indulgence of any sort is a creeping

evil. Here it is happily impossible ; and that which is impossible never becomes a necessity. A pity there are not more impossibilities out in the world."

"That," returned the doctor, "is truer than many think for. Mankind is becoming degenerated and ruined by over-indulgence and refinement. It is a bitter apple that crumbles to ashes in the mouth."

"You think so?"

"I am certain. How many men, think you, unconsciously commit suicide in this manner? What would you say if I told you the greater part? Yet it is true. What would become of us doctors, if men lived temperate lives? Such lives as God intended them to lead? For all the work we should be called upon to perform, the greater portion might retire to a monastery, and end their days in the odour of sanctity."

"How has man thus fallen?"

"How? Because one thing leads on to another. Because things impossible here are possible in the world. Because man has become a slave to himself; the body has mastered him, not he the body."

“You are drawing a terrible picture,” I cried; “though I fear not altogether an ideal one.”

“I give you leave to brush out all that is untrue,” replied the doctor. “The picture will come back to me untouched.”

“Is it not better not to think of these things?”

“Yes—as long as we are doing our best. I never allow myself more than a glance at them, and that but seldom. If I were to begin by looking at home, *I* am overdoing it: by hard, incessant work, which may one day tell upon me. This is self-indulgence in its way; the indulgence of labour.”

“Few men would call hard work self-indulgence.”

“It is, though,” he returned. “I find my pleasure in my work, just as other men find pleasure in idleness and folly and dissipation.”

“But you must do what comes before you. If a patient sends for you it is not possible to reply that you have done as much work to-day as is good for the body, and will see him to-morrow. He might die in the meantime.”

“True,” cried the doctor, laughing and consulting his watch. “And time, which runs on here just as it does in the great, fast world, reminds me that my afternoon division of labour should have begun long ago. So I bid you farewell, and leave you to solitude, and the quiet contemplation of this lovely scene.”

The solitude he spoke of was indeed scarcely possible in the midst of this wild, beautiful country. At this moment I faced the gold mountain upon which the snow was still visible. For two months in the year only—July and August—does it entirely disappear; and then not always. Occasionally, when the snows had almost melted, dense clouds would envelop the mountains; rain would fall in abundance; and when all was again clear and bright, they would stand out once more in their white, wintry garments.

To-day the snow was all but gone; only a small patch remained on the gold mountain, looking at this distance not much bigger than a man's hand. Thin streaks of white ran down the slopes, like silver threads, until the hill

intervening between Gastein and Böckstein shut out the sight.

The contrast was remarkable between the two aspects, Gastein on the one side, Böckstein on the other, the one rude, wild, stormy, the other comparatively calm and quiet : Gastein never silent from the roar of its mighty torrent, of which nothing could be heard when you were turned from it on the road to Böckstein. Here also was moving water, but of a gentle character, howbeit a gentleness that in ordinary places would have been thought wild and rough. The narrow, shallow river, rushing and leaping over large rocky stones ; now cleaving a field asunder ; now so near the mountain as to leave room for only a small, rugged, fatiguing pathway ; the noise of the water bearing the sound of a far-off sea ; its aspect very much that of angry foam. Involuntarily, the mind recalled the words, more forcible here than amongst the dignified, quiet-flowing rivers and brooks of England : “ But I go on for ever—for ever—for ever.” Absently, perhaps they would be repeated aloud, and the stream seemed to catch up the tones and carry them echoing far away on its



BOCKSTEIN.

course—"For ever—ever—ever," until, infinitely multiplied, the air appeared laden with a soft whispering of the eternal word.

Surrounded by such influences, it is impossible not to feel that there is a mysterious, a mighty power in nature; coming home to the heart more than all the sermons that ever were written: appealing directly to the soul, and causing strange yearnings after the Infinite and the Perfect. Almost it seems as if the soul had thrown off the chains and attractions and seductions of the world, and stood, as did Adam of old, face to face with the Almighty. The Hand of God is visible amongst the everlasting hills, standing as they were in the days they were created; as they were long ages before you who are gazing at them were born; as they will be long ages after you will have passed away from the scene. You feel and hear, as if spoken by a still, small voice, your immortality: and thus you are enabled to contemplate with calmness scenes of grandeur and sublimity, that otherwise would almost suspend life.

To-day, long after the scene has passed out

of sight, it is strange to think of that stream, still leaping onwards : that just as it was then being looked upon, so others may be looking upon it at this moment ; no stone, perhaps, moved from its bed ; no change in its sound or its murmur. So will it be next year, and the next, and for centuries and ages ; when every one now drawing breath in the world shall have passed over the borders of another, but unseen, and far more awful River : when hands now writing, and hearts now beating with life and love, and voices now delighting us with their soft, sweet tones, shall to this world be hushed and stilled for ever.

This walk was a favourite with me : taking the road in going, the river side in returning. But the whole way was seldom managed, for it was tiring, and would cause the doctor to look blue and gloomy. There was something attractive even in its solitude, in the rare chance of encountering a human being. But one certain day, a splendid dog crossed my path ; one of the most beautiful animals ever seen ; large and bold, with good-tempered brown eyes. He was closely followed by one of the villagers of

Böckstein. On further acquaintance the man seemed willing enough to sell the dog, and assuredly the animal would then and there have changed owners, but that happily I bethought myself in time that probably there would be greater trouble and expense in conveying the dog to England than his master. So off he went, with a lick of the tongue and a wag of the tail, and a sagacious look out of his great brown eyes that seemed to say he knew all about it and appreciated the admiration. As things turned out it would have been no slight undertaking to bring him to England. Before its shores were again reached, war had broken out between France and Prussia, and many a time I was pushed hardly to find room for myself in the heavily freighted military trains. A dog would certainly have had no chance.

It was remarkable how, at Gastein, the power of walking deserted me. This is a common experience of the place, though not universal. The shortest stroll would often prove more than enough, the journey back to the villa after dinner, a labour and toil to the poor body. When the last day had dawned,

and the baths had been some time over, I was fain to confess with reluctance that I felt little better for it all.

The doctor persisted in declaring it an excellent sign ; slow recovery would be the more sure and permanent : never mind if at times I felt rather worse than ever. It was nature working ; and she must work in her own way. Eventually the result would be satisfactory.

At present it was anything but that, and therefore I endeavoured to place as much reliance as possible in the doctor's comforting assurances. Now and then, as he predicted, there would come gleams and flashes of the old wonted health ; and these, though transient, were enough to kindle into life and animation the slight spark of hope, without which the world would scarce hold on its way.

CHAPTER XIV.

PROVERBS.

THE week's rest, ordered by the doctor, came, like other weeks, to an end; and with the happiness of going away was mixed the sorrow of leaving. All the visitors who had been there at the time of our arrival were departed. As the doctor had said a few days back, it was nothing but coming and going, coming and going; every day brought some change: and therefore he had no resource but to, as the members of a certain religious Body have it, sit loosely to the things of this world.

In one sense perhaps he did so; but in ruling and influencing his little world by energy and activity, by being at the beginning and end of everything, and working constantly to promote the happiness and comfort of others, no man could be said to be a more thorough member of this work-a-day existence.

The day before departure, he came up to me

with two or three of his photographs, in order, as he pathetically remarked, that it would be impossible to say of him "out of sight, out of mind:" he must not be altogether and completely forgotten. I assured him there was no danger of any such ingratitude arising; but he shook his head, as if he thought human nature was not always to be trusted.

"I will write you three of my proverbs," said he, "so that when you look at me you shall also hear me speak. You will then have still less excuse for forgetting these Gastein days."

Taking his largest photograph, he wrote the following sentences upon it; fearing, he said, that with his imperfect knowledge of English he had not made his meaning sufficiently clear.

1. Misfortune is but good fortune veiled.
2. Bad qualities that cannot be accounted for are almost always symptoms of severe hidden illness.
3. Between two equal duties arising at the same time, choose always the less agreeable.

"There," said he, "you have the result of experience. By constantly bearing in mind the first proverb, I have been able cheerfully

to submit to sorrow or misfortune ; and I have never found it fail. The second has often prevented my quarrelling with people, or taking offence except in very grave matters. If a man is not in a perfectly sound state of mind or body, he is not altogether accountable for his actions. The third speaks for itself.”

“ If every one followed your example there certainly would be more harmony abroad.”

“ Why should there not be ? Of what use making this short life miserable by taking offence at small things and resenting them ? It brings wrinkles to the brow and makes a man old before his time.”

“ If every one were as great a philosopher as you——”

“ Stop,” he interrupted, laughing. “ No satire, or I shall have to break my rule and take up the gloves against you.”

“ But I really mean it,” I protested. “ Your temperament is to be envied, and so is your life. You are a most happy man.”

“ If work makes happiness, I am, doubtless,” he answered. “ No man works harder. When the autumn takes away my work here,

I go and seek it elsewhere; and find almost as much to do in Nice in winter as in Gastein in summer. But this is the life I like best. It is more my own home."

"Does Gastein never become unbearable to you?"

"Never. If a man has plenty of work to do, and feels himself useful, it will reconcile him to a far worse place than Gastein."

"It seems as if it would be insupportable to me for so long a time."

"Because your lines have been placed elsewhere. The back is fitted to the burden, my dear sir. That is a proverb that will beat mine."

"I have known, nevertheless, some backs break beneath their burden."

"Burdens, then, of their own making. If a man allows his destiny to be formed for him as it was originally intended, no trial or calamity will approach him that he cannot bear. But if he wilfully and impatiently takes his destiny into his own hands, as it is allowed to men to do sometimes, he has no right to murmur if things go wrong: then, perhaps, occasionally the back will break."

“A fearful penalty to pay for a little wilfulness,” I said, “though no doubt a just one. Well for such cases if there were a Sybil to consult, who could for one moment raise the curtain that conceals the future, and give warning of danger.”

“I don’t know,” returned the doctor solemnly. “I often think of that verse in the Bible: ‘Neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.’ It is as true of men now, as it was of the Jews of old.”

“A melancholy topic for my last day,” I cried. “What has drifted us into the mysteries and motives of human nature? Let us change the subject. Have you any advice to give me in regard to health? or any counsel as to the route I should travel? You know I want if possible not to go straight back to Salzburg.”

“I do know,” said the doctor; “and you are very wise. Never take the same road twice if you can avoid it; especially in a world as beautiful as our Tyrol. I have already advised you to go to Partenkirchen: it is quiet; the very place to rest in after the baths.”

“Too quiet, I fear,” I replied in answer to his description: an inn and a house or two besides. “I am weary of these closed-in places, and can bear no more of them. Partenkirchen is worse than Gastein, you say.”

“Gastein!” he cried in amazement. “Gastein is as Paris or London in comparison. But the inn at Partenkirchen is very good and everything extremely comfortable. The landlady, too, is eccentric; a perfect study of character: a woman who will keep only such visitors as she fancies. If she likes you, she will go through fire and water for you; let you turn her place upside down; dine at midnight if it pleases you: but if she happens on the other hand to feel her sympathies untouched, away you must go: she will make the place too hot to be borne.”

“I should not care to encounter this eccentric landlady,” said I. “There is no knowing what my reception might be.”

“With a note from me,” returned the doctor, “she would fête you. But she is undoubtedly peculiar. Once a whole family arrived, nine or ten in number; and by some

means did not contrive to please her. The next morning she sent up word that if they would go at once they should have nothing to pay."

"And they went?"

"Indeed they did. The message was too startling to admit of any parleying; if they stayed, peace was at an end; so, wisely, they packed up and departed. On the other hand, I once sent her two gentlemen; patients of mine: the one was a general in the army, the other, I think, an idle man: they had nothing to do with their time but to travel about together and enjoy life. They went there with the intention of staying a week; but the cooking was so good, and the landlady looked so well after their comforts, that they remained three months."

"It is not altogether surprising, doctor. I have learned here that good cooking, if not essential to health, is not unnecessary to comfort."

"True, true," returned the doctor. "And after the shortcomings of Gastein in this department, the excellences of the eccentric

landlady's cuisine would be appreciated, if not abused. Reaction, you know, is a great power. Will this, thrown into the balance, induce you to try Partenkirchen?"

"No," with a very decided shake of the head. "I don't particularly care for the bœufs gras: but after this place, I might do so, if much tempted. I have grown tired of this monotonous, out-of-the-world life, and can't begin it afresh in a strange place: that, too, a place more lonesome, more shut out than Gastein. We will dismiss Partenkirchen. What next have you to propose?"

"Next and lastly," said the doctor, "if you are resolved to resist the attractions of Partenkirchen and its landlady, I would advise you to return as far as Golling; then branch off on the road to Gosau, and acquaint yourself with the beautiful lake scenery of the Salzkammergut."

This sounded a far more likely proposal than the last one. I had heard so much of the beauties of the Salzkammergut; of Ischl, and Hallstadt, and the lakes; that I resolved at once to adopt the suggestion. But it was a

road seldom travelled by any one; most people on leaving Gastein returned as they came; and it was doubtful if a coachman could be found willing to undertake the journey.

“But, remember,” said the doctor, “you must have rest of body and mind. I must extract from you a solemn promise that for three months there shall be no long walks, no mountain expeditions. Without that understanding you do not quit Gastein.”

The great Gamskarkogl mountain was before us, with the hundred glaciers to repay the climber for his pains. I could not refrain from imploring, chiefly out of malice, for this one exception to the rule.

“Not whilst I have breath in my body,” cried the doctor in a transport of rage. “When you have left me, if you choose deliberately to kill yourself in this manner, I cannot prevent it, but so long as you are here, and I am here——”

He stopped, shook his head in a very terrible manner, and then laughed.

“I believe you are only trying to rouse my just ire,” said he. “And so I will be off. I

will try and find an honest coachman for you to-morrow—since you needs will depart.”

There was no lack of coachmen ready to seize upon the occasion: but some had never been that way in their lives and might in consequence go wrong: others demanded an exorbitant charge, and the doctor was the last man to submit to imposition. At length one turned up answering to all requirements: a young man, active, strong, intelligent, and, as events proved, a skilful, civil driver.

“I am really grieved to make the bargain,” said the doctor, when the contract was signed and sealed. “Up to this very day, I have thought you would stay amongst us another fortnight. The rest, if not absolutely necessary, would have done you good.”

“It is impossible,” I replied. “I have written to stop all letters and papers; and to change my mind would now require an effort of moral courage of which I am not capable. The baths have been over some time; there is no just cause or necessity for remaining; and the air of the place, though so pure that it seems to belong to another world, does not suit me.”

“It appears not to suit you,” corrected the doctor. “That it does not suit you actually, remains to be proved.”

“The air is relaxing,” I continued, “though not so depressing as the relaxing air of an English climate. I am weary of being shut in by these mountains. My sight feels like to a caged bird, beating its life out against the bars of a prison: it longs for a flight which is here impossible. At times I feel almost suffocated, as if the mountains were falling upon me and the valley closing in.”

“I suppose I must give up,” returned the doctor. “And indeed, now that you have decided to visit the Salzkammergut I am inclined to let you go. Perhaps you will stay some time in Hallstadt, which is certainly quiet as it is beautiful.”

That last night in Gastein was bright and starlit, and I went forth, when the place had sunk to repose, to reconnoitre the old spots in which I had lingered often, and bid them farewell. I stood on the Bridge of Terror, and looked over into the rushing waterfall, its seething foam standing out in the darkness

like a wild restless phantom ; its thunder-roar almost a pleasant sound to-night, as I felt for me how soon it would be at an end. I strolled into the hills, and took a last look at Schiller's bust, looking in the weird, uncertain light, like the head of the poet charmed into a sleep of a hundred years. As a voice from the dead came the well-known words :

“ Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath ?
Can honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of death ?”

Poor Schiller ! he might rest quietly in his grave after his earthly storms and troubles. No bust would he care to kindle into life with his spirit. Honour's voice had fallen upon him ; fame enduring as time itself : but it could not recall from the unseen world the great soul that only shook off suffering with mortality. At this moment the calmness and silence of death made itself felt ; it seemed stamped on the surrounding scene ; it brought out the shortness of man's life : a mere breath in comparison with the old mountains ; themselves, like the ocean, almost a type of eternity : a life so short, yet so long and momentous for good

or evil ; necessitating quick action before the hour comes when the silver cord is loosed ; when work, and responsibility, and time, and chance, and change, and pleasure, and pain are laid aside, and the body returns to its earth, and the spirit to God who gave it.

For the last time, when I got back to my rooms, I took a long look out on the scene. It was stamped on the memory now, but had lost nothing by familiarity. Other than awful and solemn its wild grandeur and beauty could never be. It stood out a glorious bit of nature, matchless of its kind ; subdued in the bright, starry night but not concealed : the dark firs on the mountains silent and motionless, as if guarding the corpse of one dearly beloved : a solemn, awesome procession.

Farewell, old scene. Turn in, and close the door, and light the lamp, and draw the curtain, and let days and months and years pass ; but you will never be forgotten. Unfaded, as you, yourself, unfading.

The next morning rose bright and sunny. A cloudless sky ; no sign of change ; happily for any who were on the move, for in an open

carriage, rain would have been as unwelcome as snow in harvest. Amidst such scenery it was impossible to travel shut-up.

Packing was soon accomplished, and at seven o'clock up came Marie with breakfast, and a face as long as that of a condemned criminal. Poor Marie! It almost seemed as if I had made some impression upon her tender heart, for as soon as I expressed sorrow at leaving, which in these last moments was unfeigned, she began to cry, and hastily putting down her tray, darted from the room to give private vent to her emotions.

She returned after a while, looking a middle-aged representation of April, at once all smiles and tears. Then up followed the doctor in her wake, wondering if he could be of any use, begging and imploring that I would change my mind at the last moment, dismiss the coachman, and stay on another fortnight. He was all kindness and regret—for of course he could not prevail when matters had gone so far: full of counsel for the journey; advice as to what ought to be done, and what avoided; what might be seen without

fatigue, and what on that score was forbidden fruit.

“No mountains,” reiterated he at the last ; “no long walks ; no picture galleries : the latter are worst of all ; fatiguing to the body, but horribly so to the mind. At the end of three months, you may do all you will : go out into the world ; see pictures, climb mountains, or explore the wilds of Africa.”

“Your caution is hardly needed,” I said. “To tell you the truth, mountain-climbing is a mania by which I never was greatly bitten ; I am not philanthropist enough to explore unknown regions, and perhaps sacrifice my own life for no one’s good. As for picture galleries, I can make no rash promises about them. You are trying me too much.”

“No promises !” cried he, with a glare. “Then I will make you swear—take a vow. Swear that——”

But before he could proceed further, Marie’s voice—she had again left the room—was heard below shrilly summoning the Herr Doctor to settle some doubtless important matter ; and when he returned to the room

he had forgotten all about the vow to be taken.

Just before leaving, Marie came up with a large bouquet — she had sadly ravished the poor doctor's garden—which she presented to me with a grace and bearing that would have adorned a stage. But her emotion was real. Her tears were falling, and whilst on the one hand she chided herself for her folly, she renewed her sobs on the other.

“Surely the Herr would return next year. He would not be so cruel as never to come and see them again.”

“Of course he will return,” cried the doctor. “Marie, don't have such ridiculous doubts. My dear sir”—turning to me—“you must come back to us next May for the baths, and to complete your cure.”

I shook my head in doubt: a doubt verified with time. The next May came and went: but there was no kind doctor at hand to recommend a second visit: and Gastein was neglected.

“We cannot always do as we like,” I said. “Inclination often points one way, destiny

and duty another. I may come to you again some day, but I fear it will not be next year."

We were all sorry to part, I think, for we had harmonized together : no interregnums of unpleasantness ; no jarrings and discords : a very quiet, but a very even tenour had been preserved : and it is something to be able to say this even of a month in one's life.

At eight o'clock to the moment the carriage drew up ; signal for departure. The luggage was stowed away : a last goodbye given to the rooms : a wonder whose home they would next become : a final look out around from the old balcony : down the stairs for the last time and out at the door, and down the steps : and then ready for action.

Of course they all came forth to see the last of us. A cavalcade headed by the doctor, Marie behind him ; and then Sebastian and the remainder of the household. Even the goats stretched out their necks as far as they could from the field adjoining the garden, wondering doubtless what the un-

wonted excitement at that early hour could mean.

At last we were off; and looked after one another; and waved and watched and watched and waved; until a cruel turn of the road broke the last link of parting.

CHAPTER XV.

A THUNDER STORM.

IT must be confessed that I felt somewhat of melancholy regret at leaving. I turned and stood upright in the carriage, and as we journeyed on, watched the place slowly fading in the distance. The gradual dying away of the roar of the waterfall, whose long, foaming line might be traced when all sound had ceased : object after object flickering out, one of the last if not the least, Straubinger's itself disappearing. My sensations were very different from those of four weeks since. Then all was strange and unknown ; much had been anticipated, and intense disappointment had arisen in the first instance ; in search of health and air, both had seemed about to prove delusive ; and although these early anticipations had not been fully realized ; although the robust health hoped for was still absent—though on its way, according to the doctor ; yet something had

certainly been accomplished. The baths had been taken; the beauties of the place had become familiar and loved: a picture as unfading to the imagination as if it stood out in life and reality on canvas to the eye; acquaintances if not friends had been made—friends who had certainly proved themselves friendly: hearts that beat with kindness, and steps that lingered not to serve, and voices tuned to the key of sympathy. Even music had had its appointed place, and the soft tones of the zither had once more attested to the power of melody over the soul of man—that art the most beautiful as it is the most Divine; one of the chains at least linking earth with heaven; stretching as perfectly from one to the other as did Jacob's ladder; each link possessing as much the beauty and influence of an angel, as did the angels of his dream. St. Cecilia herself could not long for more power than she possesses; or that the angel she drew down should have had a more abiding resting-place. Music had had its part, simple but full sweet: the mighty roar of the waterfall had done its best and its worst; the bad dinners had been eaten and survived, and

seemed to have done no great amount of damage: and a quiet month had testified to the fact that man's wants here are few and may be easily satisfied, and that excitement is by no means necessary to life.

But as the minutes and half-hours flew by, the magnificent scenery through which we were passing; the feeling of motion, though the pace was steady; of being once more an active member of mankind; softened some of the regrets at leaving Gastein. It was perhaps a little ungrateful, but there it was, and it must be recorded. The villages of Hof and Dorf Gastein were in turn left behind; the wonderful Pass at the commencement of the long valley was entered, awaking all the emotions of a first acquaintance: the steep descent was commenced, and in time Leng was reached.

I had promised Marie to keep her bouquet under a glass shade; but alas when we had journeyed some distance, it was found that by some mistake I had been sitting upon the flowers. So with a good wish to their donor, away they went into the rushing Salza. And there, perchance, they are yet lying, safely em-

bedded beneath some huge stone; the testimony of a humble but kind and good heart.

We first halted at Leng on the return journey, where a second breakfast filled up gaps in time and constitution, and Johann, the coachman, thought dinner would not come amiss to him. Whilst the horses baited and rested, I strolled out, and renewed acquaintance with the waterfall. Infinitely smaller than that of Gastein it is thought by many to be of greater beauty. In situation it is most romantic, and empties itself immediately into the Salza, forming one of the many tributaries required to keep up the hungry demands of the torrent river. To stand on the river bridge, and look up and down upon the stream was almost enough to make a strong head reel. A shallow stream enough, its bed filled with great stones and bits of rock, some just covered and raising hillocks in the water; others standing out proudly, as if they would stay or turn the on-flowing current: most of them worn smooth and slippery by the constant friction. Its force is tremendous: its noise like the noise of a restless sea upon the shore: you marvel whence comes

the unfailing supply, especially when recalling the number of miles over which, with exhaustless energy, it pursues its course; now widening, now contracting, but ever shallow, ever swift. When an unusual quantity of snow is thrown into it from the mountains—at that period of the year when the snows are melting—the colour becomes a dull, brownish grey, that takes from the purity of its white foam. As the world knows, this land is not so much the region of eternal snows as Switzerland; its scenery is on a smaller scale; its mountains are less cloud-reaching: but its beauty and romance, its wildness, its effect upon the heart and soul, the life of man, cannot be exaggerated or outrivalled. So the snows, instead of remaining for ever, cold and proud upon the mountains, dissolve in kindly feelings towards the earth, and transform themselves as by magic into water; swelling and feeding this beautiful stream, until, reaching their final home in the mighty ocean, they yield up their existence into that of a power still greater than theirs.

As I stood on the bridge I threw a long

branch into the current, and felt that I should have been sorry enough to whirl along on its surface at the rate with which it disappeared. Now sweeping on; now stopped in mid-career by rock or stone; now hurled on again by the force of the stream, hurrying, hurrying as if loosened to freedom after ages of captivity. Where would the swift chase end?

After a time—it seemed a long pause, and Johann and the horses must have been very great eaters or very slow ones—we started off again. A great part of the day was before us, but so also was a long journey, and Johann whipped up his cattle as if he had a mind to rival in speed the stream beside which we were travelling. Presently St. Johann was reached. Johann had evidently a strong affection for the village whose name he bore—though if conscientious he would probably have hesitated to assume the saintly prefix—and for the pretty maid who ran out of the inn, as we passed quickly its sign flying in the wind: a surprised look in her eyes, a pout on her cherry lips, as she wondered why he had not halted a moment to give her the accustomed greeting. But it

would never do to lose so much time on the road ; and in spite of Johann's sidelong glance and melancholy sigh, he knew that he must press on towards Werfen. One village succeeded another, until in the afternoon Werfen was entered and another rest earned.

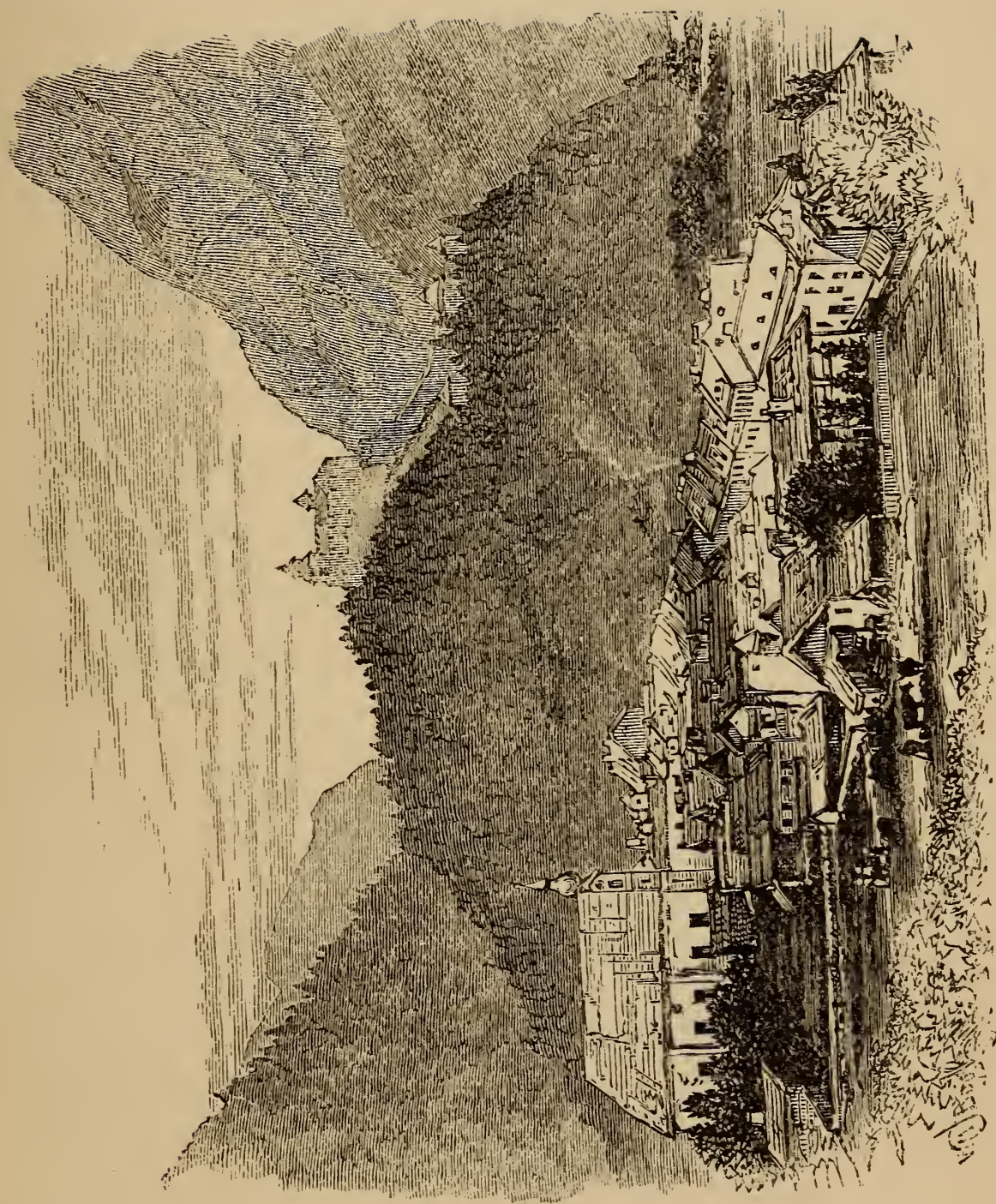
Here, in this second halt, we dined ; well and reasonably. The landlady, whose fat sides alone were sufficient recommendation for the resources of her larder, brought in soup and a boiled chicken, finishing up with pastry peculiar to the place. By way of dessert, she placed on the table a large dish of wild strawberries, of which, without experience, the delicate and delicious flavour cannot be imagined.

Before leaving the village I strolled once more into the churchyard, with its small quiet graves : into the church, where at the first visit the organ was sounding and the villagers were assembled at their morning devotion. Now it was silent and deserted ; all were away fulfilling their daily tasks ; the priest perchance was composing his next Sunday's discourse ; or stealing a nap after a comfortable dinner.

Suddenly, in a moment as it seemed, a great

bank of clouds came up from behind the mountains, and spread over the sky. The heat of the day had been tropical; the clouds brought with them a feeling of closeness and suffocation still less endurable: rain began to fall; large drops here and there, ending in a perfect torrent. Then came a flash of lightning, followed instantaneously by a peal of thunder that went crashing amidst the hills, and rolling and echoing adown the valley.

What a grand sight and sound, this storm, amidst the wild surrounding scenery; for Werfen is one of the wildest spots on the road. The lightning was vivid and incessant; the thunder loud and continuous; a crash and battle of the elements that now in fury seemed to vie with each other. The thunder rolled down the valley with a voice like to millions of war chariots in pursuit: one mountain nook after another caught up the terrible echo until the air was full of the sound of Nature's great diapason. The castle in which the Protestants had been so mercilessly persecuted: whence, after the most revolting tortures, their remains were thrown down the rocky precipice until they plashed



WERFEN

with a dull thud into the rushing stream at its foot: stood out, high and conspicuous upon its stronghold, as if offering resistance to an avenging and Almighty Power. Many a time, in those bygone days, the monks must have quailed before these signs of Divine wrath; hiding their faces and perhaps repeating Paternosters in their conscience-stricken terror; until the fury of the elements had passed away, and Nature, like the face of a pacified child, once more smiled through her tears. Many a pine-tree, struck down and blasted in its strength, must have read them a warning; if they would but have looked and listened. But there the castle stands to-day, precisely as it stood in centuries ago; not a stone loosened from its place; not a loophole blocked up; a memento of dark ages and darker deeds; a record of past error, and cruelty, and superstition; a witness of present glory, and peace, and beauty.

Persecutors and persecuted have long passed away: superstition has yielded to the power of intellect and civilization; to the triumph of truth and the good cause: life and light have

won their way through fields of blood ; through fire and water ; through life and death ; through such human suffering and endurance as cannot be told ; having overcome and trampled under foot all enemies. The struggle and battle have cost unnumbered lives, each one of which would tell perhaps of an unseen, unrecorded martyrdom : but unrecorded only until that day when they shall wake once more to their reward, the resurrection of life and immortality.

All have passed away : footsteps that echoed in these corridors of time echo no more ; they are laid aside with the heads that plotted, and the hearts that suffered, and the hands that worked for good or evil : but there stands the castle, and there perhaps it will remain to the very end. To-day, amidst the black clouds, and the dark pines, and the frowning mountains, it was lighted up with a vividness no earthly power could yield. Almost it seemed to sway and tremble in its fierce contest with the storm, though this could have been but imagination ; in reality its seat upon the rock is as firm and proud as in the days of its youth : its battlements vigorous in their hoary

age. It stood up in the valley, between the mountains, insensibly bringing to mind that verse of the Old Testament where Moses "stood between the dead and the living." All that was here, it is true, was a dead past; the present, everything before me, was living; a life full of vigour and heart-throbbing; no sign of death or decay save in the little church-yard on the right, with its small graves and crosses, bearing names of old and young alike, its dates of long since or of yesterday. It stood proudly challenging the mountains, not dwarfed by contrast with their great height. The path to the castle was steep and rugged, yet but for the storm I would have climbed it, and gone through the rooms: the scenes of thoughts and actions before which we need veil our faces, and close our ears, and hide away our sympathies.

With your back turned to the village, the castle was the only sign of human life and labour visible around: a vast monument of man's skill and greatness, and yet how small and puny when thus compared with the mountains. It frowned upon you, as if feeling that

after all you had the best of it, and could build up and pull down at will; whilst the mountains in calm, secure pride, shot forth their heads heavenwards: and the river—that had been steeped with the blood of martyrs, and carried far on its bosom the groans of the racked and the death-rattle of the dying—mingling in a long farewell the wail of husband, brother, lover—now, unmolested, unburdened, pursued the current of its stream.

The storm at length cleared; the last flash had shot forth; the last echo departed; the clouds broke up and rolled away as a scroll rolls away from before a flame, and once more the sun had free play. Time was passing and becoming precious; a considerable distance still had to be travelled, and it was a matter of some importance, amidst rough roads and steep precipices to come to a final anchor ere the perils of darkness and the night had set in. So, quickly, the horses were brought round and harnessed (laugh not at the harness!), and we were soon again on the road. The greatest heat of the day was passed; the storm, also, for the moment had cooled the air; the luxury

of lying back in the carriage after dinner—which though simple might have satisfied an epicure—without bodily effort and exertion, was inexpressibly delightful. Under the influence the mountains seemed to wrap themselves round you in loving arms: the gurgling of the river lulled you into a sense of outward forgetfulness: a rushing, frothy, monotonous sound broken now and then by a dull thud, as a log of wood came into violent contact with a stone. In this manner is the rapid stream utilized, and labour economized in a land where economy is essential to its well-being. The trees cut down and sawn into logs, are thrown into the water, and left to find their way in solitude through many and many a long mile from their starting point.

The afternoon wore on in a delicious dream; the senses thoroughly alive, the body only inactive. Evening grew apace; the sun had long sunk behind the mountains, and thrown out shadows, and cast depths and darkness amidst the pines; the steep pass, that had required the strength of three horses in coming, was descended; and about seven o'clock

was entered once more the quaint village of Golling.

Quaint and stiff as ever it seemed to-night ; quaint and beautiful. Here, too, there had lately been a procession, and against most of the houses were ranged trees and great branches, propped up like dummies at a show ; giving the place a holiday and festive look comically at variance with its quaker-like angularity. As the carriage rattled down, I caught sight of the blacksmith's boy, who had accompanied us to the waterfall. He gave a glad nod of recognition ; perhaps on the look out for another apple, or another keepsake that, like the sovereign the Vicar of Wakefield gave his daughters, was on no account to be changed ; but either his modesty got the better of him, or he was called away by his master, for he did not turn up again.

Whilst tea was preparing, as before, I strolled out to stretch my legs and take another look at the place in the first flush of gloaming. As I did so, the vesper bell rang out for prayers. Immediately, all ceased their occupations, and remained stationary, some falling upon their

knees, others standing with reverence. For a few moments the whole village, whether indoors or out, in church or away from it, was thus engaged in the solemn act of a general prayer and thanksgiving. Who could be unimpressed with the sight? or fail to recognize and appreciate the simple nature of these unworldly people?

Another noisy, sleepless night, which here seems, just as much as the day, to have its stated work for every hour. Again the watchman went by at regular intervals, singing and proclaiming in a voice more doleful than ever; again the dogs barked their protest. At two o'clock up came the diligence from Gastein, with one inside passenger, too sleepy and comfortable apparently to turn out into the chilly night. The guard rang the bell, and the old clang awoke the old echoes through the building; the horses were changed, greetings passed, doors banged, whips cracked furiously; and away they dashed once more, full gallop for Salzburg.

At half-past six we were to start off again towards Gosau, and long before the appointed

hour I was up and dressed, ready for breakfast and the road. It was a bright morning. The sun had risen splendidly, bathing the hills and landscape in a flood of rosy light ; but when we first set out, as before, the air was cold and raw, and rugs and wrappers were a stern necessity.

From this point the journey was opening up fresh ground, and from the doctor's description I was prepared for grand scenery. Grand and sublime it was, indeed and in truth, for many hours. From six in the morning until about seven in the evening we passed through a succession of panoramic views, of which no real representation could give the faintest idea. Up steep hills, and down hills yet steeper ; by chain after chain of towering mountains ; winding through narrow roads where now suddenly the heights seemed to be closing in upon you, and now as suddenly to open out and recede, so that with the quickness of magic the splendour and wild beauty of some hidden pass would burst upon the eye : now journeying side by side with the fast-flowing stream ; now crossing it on rustic bridges formed of rough

logs of wood rudely thrown over a few rafters ; so unsteady and apparently so unsafe that instinctively you sprang up ready for a jump if the vehicle overturned. Now losing the stream altogether from sight, yet by the flowing sound knowing it to be not far off. Now descending a long hill, so steep that it was almost as bad as scaling the side of a house ; a hill like a winding staircase, in which, as the carriage turned and turned, it seemed momentarily about to pitch you over into the yawning precipice. To timid minds it would have been in the last degree terrifying ; to others of a bolder type the very danger and excitement carried a charm. But, for the sake of the poor horses, and the drags, and the vehicle, it was a good thing over. The roads in some parts were enough to break up any ordinary carriage ; reminding one of the roads in the wilder and more uncivilized regions of Scotland : though the latter have infinitely the advantage of the comparison.

The first halt was made at St. Johann—a very different place from the St. Johann on the road to Gastein : more English in appear-

ance than any village yet encountered. Here we breakfasted, and whilst the horses rested, inspected the church. It was more peculiar than most of its kind in the Tyrol. On the outside were several representations in relief from the Bible, a custom prevalent in some parts: an ugly, unsightly custom, from the hideous manner in which the scenes are executed. But the strangest sight was a small building to the left of the church for funerals, and the decorations upon the walls. Cross-bones and other mournful and death-reminding objects met the eye; and in a small, square box of glass, was the skull of a woman: her age, name, and date of death, her exemplary life, her numerous virtues, and a career spent in doing good to the village, duly recorded in the inscription.

After St. Johann, no especial halt was made. One long, steep ascent lasting about two hours, necessitated four horses, and even then, at times, way was made with the greatest possible difficulty. Indeed the troubles of the road are so formidable that carriages seldom attempt the journey. But few, it is to be

imagined, can tell what they lose by passing it by, and pursuing the straight road on to Salzburg. It was one long drive of overwhelming impressions ; each fresh turn bringing out some new feature in the landscape, grander and more sublime, as it seemed, than the last. In places the mountains were wild and rugged ; here and there huge overhanging fragments had fallen from the surface, revealing beneath a red, rock-like substance ; in others they were softer and covered with verdure, pines, and innumerable clusters of the wild Alpine rose.

In passing one of these mountains where the roses clustered some distance up the height, Johann's desire for adventure got the better of his discretion. In a twinkling he was off his box, and climbing up with the agility of a wild cat. Meanwhile the horses thinking they would like a little fun on their own account started off for a quiet gambol. On one side was the mountain ; on the other, within a foot or so of the carriage, the edge of a wild, deep precipice, at the bottom of which the river ran over its rocky bed. For a moment the man

looked back, hesitating between horses and roses. The latter probably would have conquered, but not waiting to ascertain, I jumped out and held them until his return. He soon came down, bearing in triumph a large bunch of flowers. His face beamed with smiles; his hands were covered with scratches; but the pride with which some of the blossoms were transferred to his hat, and some offered to the occupants of the carriage, would have atoned for deeper wounds. With that beaming look upon his face it was almost impossible to blame the man for deserting his post, seeing that in the end no harm had arisen. It was but the second time in his life he had made the journey, the first being five years previous: and with delight he had seized upon the chance of a change in the monotony of the usual route.

The mountains were most densely covered with pines at the Pass Geschütt, a wild, unearthly gorge. As we drew near the Gosauswang the road became good and passable, and the latter end of the journey was smooth and even. It gradually formed into a narrow,

picturesque glen, leaving just room enough for the rapid torrent and the road. At length, a sharp descent, the bridge crossed, the Gosauswang passed—a sort of aqueduct bridging the chasm, and containing the pipes that stretch along the mountains for conveying the brine—and the Gosau-Mühle, on the borders of the wonderfully picturesque lake of Hallstadt, brought that day's travelling to a close.

Johann was dismissed with a trinkgeld, with which he was so delighted that he was positively about to testify his gratitude with a real German hug, from which the intended recipient only escaped with a backward spring.

CHAPTER XVI.

AT LAKE HALLSTADT.

TO arrive at eventide at Gosau-Mühle and the calm beauty of the Lake of Hallstadt at the end of a journey so rough and rude as to be almost perilous, is like falling to rest upon calm waters after experiencing for many hours the rage of an ocean storm. Mind and spirit have been strung to the last pitch of excitement by an unbroken panorama of glorious and unimaginable scenery; the body has become fatigued and weary and almost bruised by jolting into ruts and jolting out of them; stumbling over stones and escapes from precipices; by sitting hour after hour in a vehicle built for strength and wear far more than show and luxury.

The journey is over; the scenery is passed; that which lies before the eye is of so different a nature that it may belong to a new world;

another day is sinking to rest; Gastein is falling away.

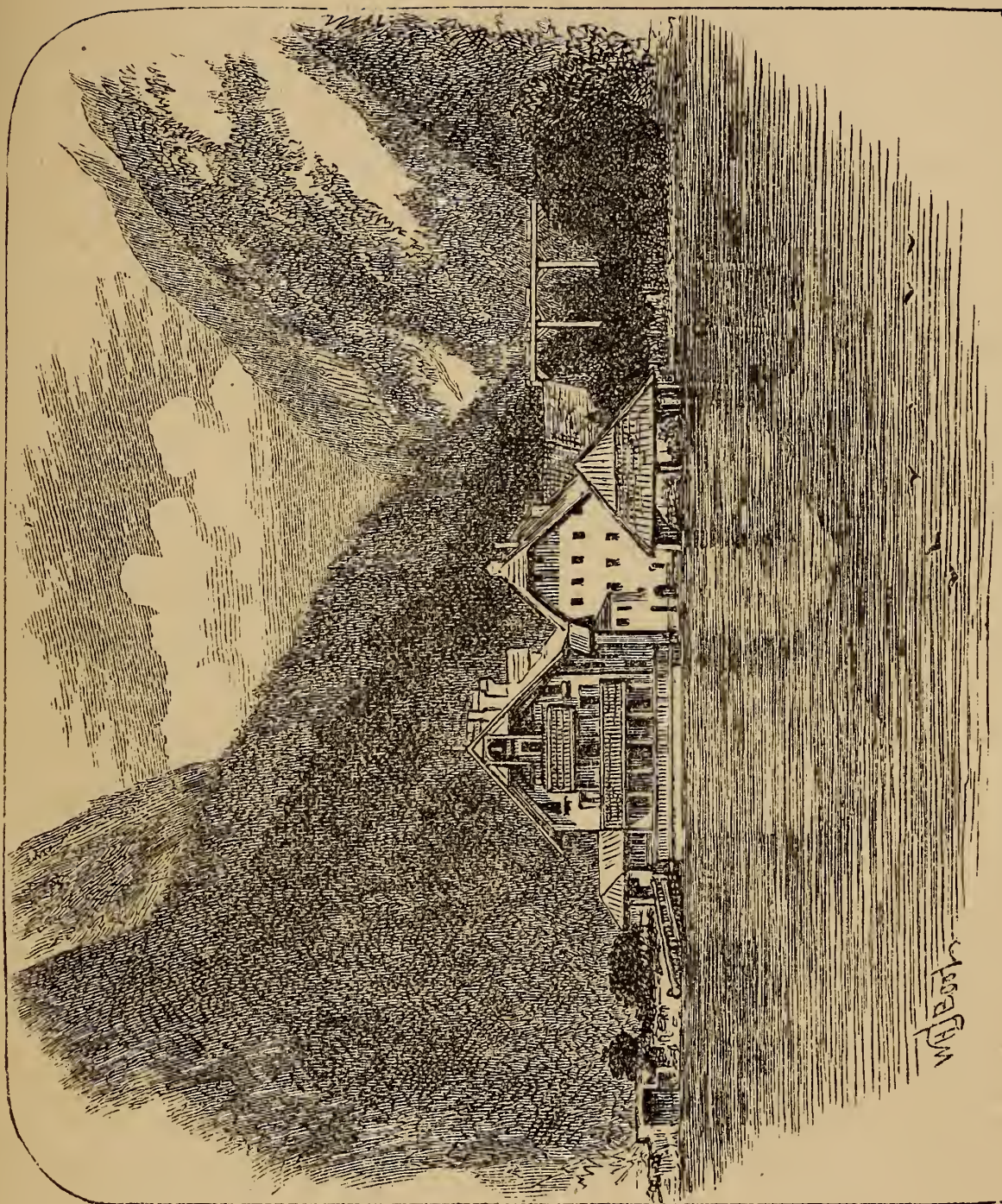
It had been intended to go on to Hallstadt that evening by the small steamer that plies the lake. But about and around the half inn, half restaurant at Gosau-Mühle there lurked so decided an air of repose, that worn out with a two days' journey and a sleepless night, it was determined to remain here the night, and to defer until the next morning a further search for pastures fresh and new. The maid, a superior woman, appeared and spoke as one above her position: the master of the inn, a young man strong and tall, seemed glad enough to entertain visitors, and make them comfortable: and the end of it was that the one day at Gosau-Mühle prolonged itself into a sojourn of four or five.

For it proved far pleasanter than Hallstadt. The latter place had been recommended by the doctor, as affording a prospect of quiet rest combined with the beauties of scenery. Both of these recommendations it certainly possessed, to the point of excellence; but thereto it added a drawback, to be mentioned pre-

sently, that rendered it sheerly impossible to pay it anything beyond a few hours' visit.

The beauty of Hallstadt is as remarkable as it is peculiar. It claims an individuality entirely its own. Perhaps there is not another spot like it in the world. With the exception of a small footpath half way up the mountain, it can only be reached by a small steamer on the lake. Everything taken into Hallstadt in the shape of provisions is conveyed by this means. The effect on first approaching it in this little vessel is such as it would be difficult to find elsewhere. The beauty and romance of its situation strike upon you at once. The small, white, Swiss-looking cottages on the mountain side, perched one above another, in picturesque irregularity, here and there embedded in foliage from which they peep out shily as a mistress watching the return of her lover, might almost be taken from a distance for nests, the home of eagles and the feathered fowl of the air.

But in the first evening at Gosau-Mühle all this was as yet unknown. Sitting out on the balcony overhanging the water, it was not



GOSAU-MÜHLE, LAKE HALLSTADT.

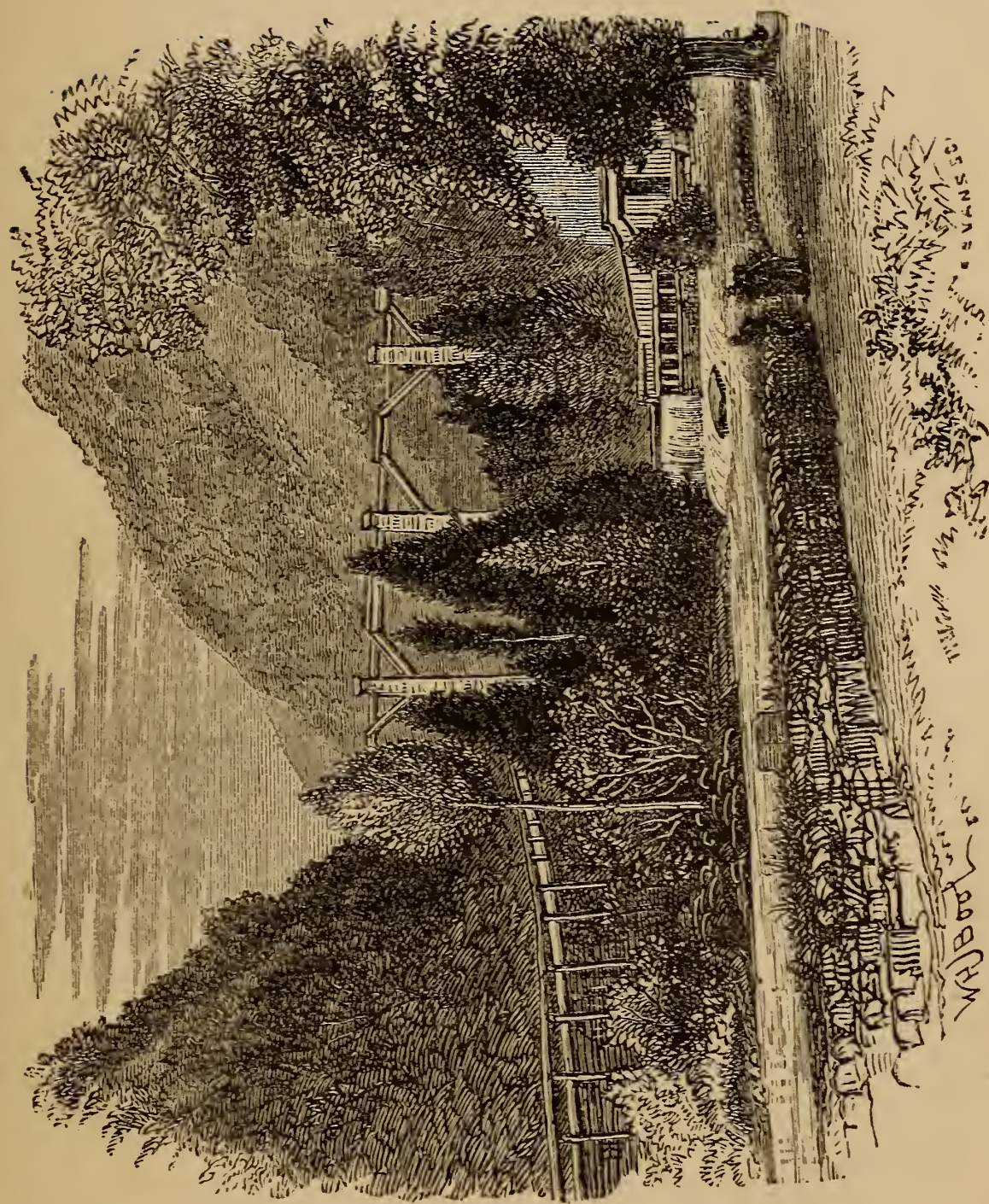
even dreamed of. Twilight was falling upon the mountains opposite, and as it deepened into night, so did the reflection of their shadow upon the water, until it looked dark, cold, and treacherous. The mountains were high, and precipitous almost as a wall. The surface of the lake was smooth and unruffled; and the multitude of fish seemed to have played out their day's pleasure and to be preparing for sleep. No sound broke the stillness, save the running of the stream emptying itself through the locks into the lake. To the right was the Gosau-Mühle—or mill—itself. In this lake the logs of wood that had streamed along so many miles of river at length found resting place. They would come banging and booming down, and at last be steered into the lake, whence by degrees they were transported into the mill.

Sawing was always going forward in the mill, from Monday morning till Saturday night. This gave employment to a number of hands, encamped in a cluster of cottages close by; a small colony of people, who repudiated all dealings with neighbouring Hallstadt on the

one hand, or the various villages on the other. The mill gave work to men only ; old, middle-aged, and young : a fine, handsome race the latter : but as, since the creation, it has not been good for man to live alone, so it happened in the natural order of things that wives and sweethearts were not an unknown blessing in this exclusive settlement.

Behind the inn on the other side was the end of the valley, and the Gosauswang perched up aloft like a narrow bridge, on to which you might clamber, if so inclined, and look upwards at the stream that parted the mountains, and around on the lake stretching far and wide.

That first evening we sat long upon the balcony ; long into the darkness. It was so pleasant to let the eye rest upon this calm water ; so great a contrast to the restless torrent of Gastein. The rattle of the carriage was still singing in the ears, making the present stillness almost weird in its intensity. It was like being shut out from the world ; and to think of that far-off roar and tumult, each life in the crowd teeming with a thousand plans and purposes of its own, was like imagining



END OF THE VALLEY AND GOSAUSWANG.

something that had never existed or never could exist again.

It was almost an awful sensation, this sense of isolation. Many a man might go mad with too much of it, if his mind had not resources that enabled him to make a world for himself apart from them. I almost felt that I should never again see this busy world, from which I had been so long cut off—but it was not so very long before I was in the midst of some of the busiest, most heartrending scenes of Europe.

It was difficult, almost impossible, to realize, seated there, that there was an outside world full of life and activity; minds plotting for power, plans ripening for a great convulsion. The quietness was at once soothing and depressing; and as night wrapped her dark mantle round the mountains, and crept over the surface of the lake, shutting out everything from sight, the dreariness was well nigh enough to make one repent the resolution to pass a night in this dull abode.

But the next morning sent blues and glooms and repentance to the winds. The sun rose gloriously, and threw around its influence on

man and mountain. The beauties of the spot seemed tenfold greater than they had appeared in last night's twilight. A long, unbroken sleep had restored the mind to a more healthy tone, dissipating clouds and cobwebs; and when breakfast was over, and the small steamer ploughed its way up the lake to the pier, we were quite ready to embark on an expedition to Hallstadt.

It was but a small steamer, and could not do great things in speed; so that, although the distance was short, we were ten minutes or more in reaching Hallstadt. Ten pleasant minutes on the water as we steamed leisurely through wonderful scenery, and felt that there were no arms to tire with the exertion of rowing, and no one to grumble. But at last we were landed; and the beauty of the place, and its strange, unworldlike appearance, were soon found to possess a drawback of a most unpleasant, insurmountable description. It might naturally occur to the mind that the people would be as primitive and picturesque as their habitation, but a greater mistake was never conceived. No

place ever gave me so great a feeling of wretchedness and repulsion. The men and women were not only small of stature, ugly of feature, but nearly all more or less deformed. Some were humpbacked; some had withered arms and hands; some appeared misshapen from head to foot; many were simple or idiotic; scarce a woman but had a goitre throat; most were toothless.

Various reasons contribute to this state of things. From their isolated position they have continually married and intermarried amongst each other. Those who belong to Hallstadt will not leave it; they could not very well do so indeed, for they seem unfitted to go out and battle with the world; and new people will not come to it. It is not pleasant to be so separated from your fellows, and the place offers no advantages whatever to compensate for this drawback.

That so beautiful a spot should be so afflicted was a grievous matter: a greater contrast than between place and people could not exist. The men for the most part work in the salt mines, in itself an unhealthy occupation. The mines

to some extent impregnate the air with salt-petre, another influence which appears to work against health and life. The utmost pay the men receive in flourishing times is at the rate of about three shillings and sixpence a week, and many upon this have to rear a family of ten or twelve children : six is a very ordinary number. When times are bad and there is no work to be had, they earn nothing, and must live as they can ; sometimes getting a slight relief from the church when the poor box is not empty ; often verging upon starvation. This abject poverty helps to the general state of misshapen humanity which here seems so universal, and is so distressing. Turning into the churchyard a sight met the eye too revolting for record ; but nothing could have given a greater proof of the heathenism of the people. At some little distance upon a wall, also, two skulls were bleaching in the sun ; from the adjoining cottage, whose windows overlooked the revolting graveyard, out ran a child with that peculiar gibbering of the idiots, who had been taught to beg—the only trade he could learn.

Beggars indeed met one at every step ; old

women, who were nothing but shrunken deformities, and young men and boys half-witted or maimed. Some of the poor wretches went upon crutches, others upon all fours; but most of them, in a sing-song tone painful enough to hear, held out their hands and begged for charity. Surely the doctor, had he ever been here himself, and witnessed these sights, would not have recommended Hallstadt as a resting-place, in which days or weeks might pass pleasantly. True, it was possible to go to one of the two inns, and sit out all day long upon the balcony facing the lake, and shut yourself away from the people, but the very idea of proximity to them was in itself unbearable. The quiet of Gosau-Mühle, where the people were more civilized and human, was a thousand times preferable. Indeed it was a mystery how in the short distance there could be so much difference in the race: for at Gosau-Mühle they were tall, well formed and handsome.

The beauty and singularity of Hallstadt is as much its own as are the afflictions of its people. Perched on the mountain side, it has no streets.

The houses are built with puzzling irregularity, the means of communication from one to the other a few rough steps, or here and there a footpath a few feet in length. For three or four months in the year the sun never falls upon the village, and it grows dark before the day is half over: a source of misery which may in some sort be realized, if we remember how gloomy we ourselves feel when only for three or four days without the good influence of sunlight. This, added to their poverty, must make their existence hard and dreary indeed; literally and figuratively destitute of sunshine.

Upon the faces of many, men and women, was a look of trouble, as if the burden of life was hard to bear. In so out-of-the-world a spot you might fancy living to be reasonable, but it is not so. All animal food is brought from a distance, and the poor have to go without it, with the exception perhaps of a very few times a year by way of a treat. Strangers seldom take up their abode in Hallstadt, though many visit it for a few hours. No one indeed ought to miss doing so when in the neighbour-

hood. With regard to the deformities spoken of, it is possible that I saw the worst of them, and that many who were away at their work and out of sight were less unhappily afflicted.

The inn was an old-fashioned, rambling house, built chiefly of wood, large enough for a small palace. It seemed miserably uncomfortable, with its naked walls and bare floors and tables; a place where lurked a sense of mystery, an atmosphere of murder. Had I stayed there I should certainly have gone to sleep that night with a feeling of possible foul play before morning; an unseen trap door, or sliding panel, or false ceiling; though no doubt it was all fancy, and the keepers were as simple and harmless as if the existence of evil were nothing but a problem.

After rambling through the building in the wake of a stout landlady—who seemed not to share in the poverty of her neighbours—it became evident that it would be much better to return to Gosau-Mühle rather than remain in this uncomfortably mysterious old barn. The house was full of passages, and short staircases, and when you thought you had

reached the end of the tour of inspection, the sudden turning of a corner would reveal a fresh wilderness of passages and rooms and flights. At last we came to anchor upon the balcony—or rather a stage the size of a large room, built out upon the water. Then to repay the landlady for her trouble, I ordered some trout to be served up.

Such trout exists nowhere else. Its delicious flavour would drive an epicure mad with delight. The shortcomings of the place, the sight of the deformities of the people, would be compensated by this one single virtue. I felt that I had never before tasted real trout, and that such trout as this was food only worthy of being coupled with the drink of nectar. The cook had a peculiar way of baking them; they eat with a crisp dry flavour, of which the only drawback was that it was too soon over. It was seducing to the palate. I found on experience that the trout was good at Gosau-Mühle, but inferior to this: the whole of the Salzkammergut is famous for its trout, as are many parts of the Tyrol; but none came up to Hallstadt. It was not an over-cheap luxury; for they charged at the rate of five or



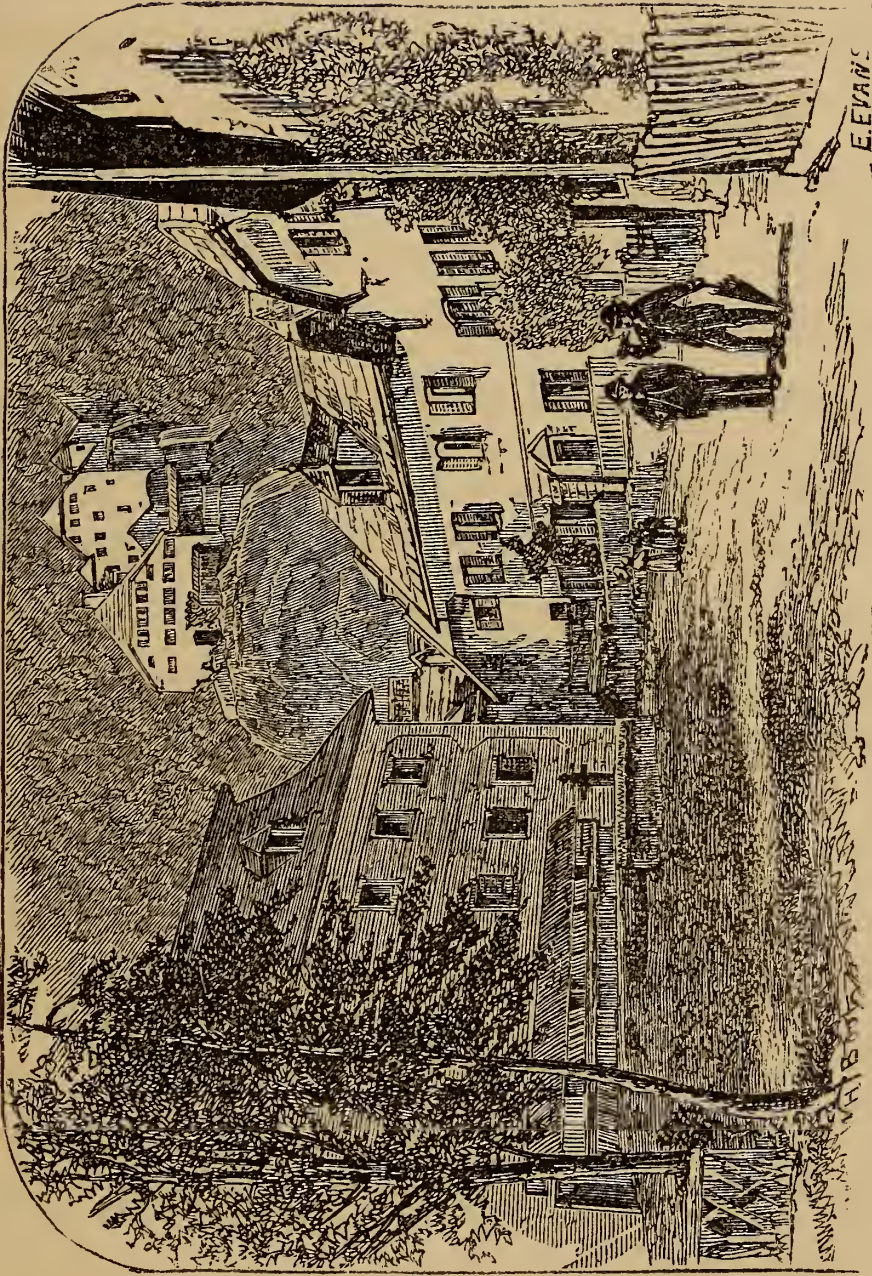
HALLSTADT.

six shillings for four small fish. Whether this was their usual demand ; or whether the landlady was not quite so simple-minded as she might have been, and took advantage of a stranger's ignorance ; or whether she had determined to be revenged for that long ramble, arduous to her fat sides, through the lofty halls and corridors of her domain, interminable as those of Eblis ; was a matter for doubt and speculation. The fish were eaten and they had to be paid for : and in a place where a sense of mystery and an atmosphere of murder appealed to the imagination it was impossible for the tongue to utter a remonstrance. An exquisite cup of café noir helped to while away the moments until the steamer was once more in readiness to return on her journey.

It is impossible to exaggerate the beauty of Hallstadt, and its romantic site. The lake, at the extremity of which it rises into life—one can hardly say animation—is five miles long, in places more than a mile broad, and as much as a hundred fathoms deep. From one end to the other there is scarcely a human habitation to be seen. Almost you might

be in a country of the dead, a dead stillness reigning : nothing breaking in on the monotony, or toning down its wild and gloomy aspect. The mountains rise precipitously from its borders, casting their black shadows upon the water, which becomes almost dark as Erebus. No roadway adorns its side ; there is not room for it ; and so between Hallstadt and Gosau-Mühle there is nothing but the small footpath in the mountain, and the steamer for visitors and merchandize.

Few lakes surpass this in beauty. The one day promised to Gosau-Mühle prolonged itself into four or five : days of such intense quiet as might be found in the midst of a desert. The weather was fine and warm ; the sunshine, now abundant, unbroken by a cloud. For occupation I would sit out on the balcony and watch the men working in the mills ; or piloting the logs of wood with long poles from the locks to the lake, where they clustered in a sort of raft forming an immense circle. Upon this raft men and boys would launch, packing the logs, and drawing into the mill those immediately required. Every now and then one



MARKET PLACE, HALLSTADT.

less careful than the rest would slip between and splash into the lake, and for a moment disappear; a feat his comrades greeted with shouts of laughter that awoke the echoes of the mountains. All this was animated enough; one small spot forming an exception to the surrounding scene: a scene so full of beauty that it grew upon the eye, almost as a home face grows upon the heart, and leaves there its image and influence. Every hour's familiarity only made its charm, its wild dignity, more apparent: the long quiet reach of still waters, the silent mountains guiltless of all sign of life, you might look upon hour after hour, and still look on. And if at last somewhat weary of the picture, which was not a little mournful in its isolation, you had but to turn your chair half round upon the lively little mill sheds, to the men who seemed endowed with perpetual motion and perpetual sunshine.

They appeared happy and simple; strong and handsome; a strange contrast, it has been remarked, to the people of Hallstadt. On Sunday afternoon they assembled, dressed in their best, in the yard separating the old inn

from the new. A long wooden table was brought out, at which they sat, some forty of them, drinking beer, laughing and singing; amusing themselves in a quiet, orderly manner; old and young fraternizing; merry and jovial, but in no sense uproarious. Now and then one or two of the maids would peep out of the doorway, and say something to one of the younger of the men that would cause him to start up in pursuit. A scream, a scramble, and under cover of the house, a forfeit, perhaps resisted, but none the less liked. This day out of the seven was their only day of rest; a rest fairly earned. Who can imagine an existence more quiet than this? more simple, uneventful, or free from care? Are there any who would exchange a life of riches and luxury, the whirl of society and the toil of business, for that of these men, in whose closet lurks no skeleton?

Under the quiet surface of the water, too, life and activity were not wanting. A few crumbs of bread, dropped in, would bring shoals upon shoals of small trout into view, struggling, quarrelling, fighting for the bait, as if it was

as delicate a morsel to them as they were in turn to others. The biggest and greediest generally got the most: showing that in some things at any rate it is very much in the world of fishes as it is in the world of men.

CHAPTER XVII.

COMING BACK TO THE WORLD.

IT was almost impossible to leave the neighbourhood without seeing the Vorder-see, a small but beautiful lake, crowned by the Dachstein, the largest and grandest mountain in the Salzkammergut. But this was not to be undertaken without transgressing the doctor's orders. There was no mountain to climb, but it entailed a long walk up a tolerably steep ascent, which would only be accomplished with considerable fatigue. At last, after making various enquiries, it appeared that at the blacksmith's shop at Gosau a chaise-à-porteurs might be hired, and with the help of a couple of strong men, convey any one to the very borders of the lake without bodily exertion.

Behold us then, one morning, starting for the village of Gosau, jolting up the valley in a roughly built, uncomfortable, springless machine, drawn by a cadaverous looking animal they

called a horse. The pitiable beast looked antediluvian, and certainly was a skeleton; and as he toiled in a heavy lumbering manner, the vehicle kept time with his paces with an up-and-down movement that was very novel and very disagreeable. But we made way in spite of difficulties in a drive of about ten miles; up the glen by the side of the stream; past the mountains loaded with clusters of the Alpine rose, fragrant with wild strawberries, and abounding in wild flowers, some familiar enough to English eyes, some known only in these districts. At length the valley was left to the right, and a road opened out, disclosing the valley of Gosau, backed by the pinnacles of the Donnerkogel and Zornikogel, the western ridges of the Dachstein. This Dachstein occupies a position worthy of its greatness, being what may be termed the boundary stone separating Styria, Salzburg, and Austria from each other.

A short drive brought us to Gosau; a straggling village which appeared to have neither beginning nor ending, its houses scattered here and there in ones and twos over an extent of three miles.

The crazy vehicle rattled up to the blacksmith's, which is also the inn of the place ; so small and dirty, that a wayfarer must have been very hard up for a night's lodging before venturing to rest his weary limbs in the hovel. The smith, himself, a Vulcan of tremendous height and muscle, looked as if he could have carried off his house, forge included, on his shoulders. He came forward at the sound of wheels, and when enquiries were made for the chaise-à-porteurs, dived rapidly again within the dark, mysterious precincts of his abode.

Presently, out came two men, bearing between them an old-fashioned arm-chair resting upon poles. Into this I was requested to be seated, and with the sensations of a martyr and the dignity of a pope, my body bruised and aching from head to foot with the drive, obeyed the command.

The motion of the sedan was indescribable. My first experience in this mode of travelling, I trusted it would also be the last. Never had I felt so helpless and dependent: so much at the mercy of others; whilst the swaying of the chair and the measured tramp of the men gave

me a sensation of assisting at my own funeral; a feeling hitherto reserved for dreams. Fifty times I upbraided myself for quitting the quiet waters of Gosau-Mühle in search of fresh beauties and adventures.

From the blacksmith's to the Vorder-see was more than an hour's walk up an uninterrupted ascent, but in spite of the undesirable mode of progress it was impossible not to enjoy the scenery. The way led through a species of forest thinly populated with trees, their branches here and there overshadowing the path. The grass was soft and mossy to the foot, and wild flowers sprang up in nooks and crevices. It was a pastoral scene, wherein we might have made progress to the strains of Handel, or Beethoven's grander symphony. Occasionally the men, strong and stalwart though they were, put down their burden and rested themselves on the poles; humiliation to me so keen that I felt inclined to throw doctor's orders and personal vows to the winds, quit the odious machine, and walk. The entire scene was so lonely and desolate that it was easy to fancy it as yet untrodden by

the foot of man. Without sign of human habitation, it had preserved its rugged wildness and grandeur. Approaching the end, the path became more steep and rugged, leading through a fir wood, not very dense or dark; and at last, in an abrupt and unexpected manner we suddenly came in view of the lake itself. It was small, and at first sight disappointing to the lofty expectations formed of it. Closely shut in and surrounded by a foreground of dark fir trees, they threw their black shade upon the water, and gave it a solemn, gloomy appearance. At the opposite end rose the Dachstein in majesty, glaciers hanging from its sides of ice—blue and white: on the very summit an enormous one that seemed to shift even as we looked. Here the ice never melts: in the heat of summer and the depth of winter it is there, defying all seasons, all time.

As we looked, the sky became overcast with thick clouds that turned the blue ice purple and the water more threatening: so cold and dark and deep as almost to cause a shudder. What a quiet, soundless sleep it would be, reposing



VORDER-SEE, WITH THE DACHSTEIN IN THE BACKGROUND.

there in the silent shadows of its unfathomable depths ! Large drops began to fall, threatening a soaking at any rate, without the trouble of tumbling into the lake's dark waters. But the clouds happily passed on their journey, down into other regions. Having satisfied the eye with a long view and endeavoured to impress it upon the memory, the procession once more set off on its backward journey. This time it was easy, downhill work, the blacksmith's was reached in good speed, and with no small reluctance I once more climbed into the rickety vehicle. Safely landed at Gosau, with almost a concussion of the spine, I looked out upon the quiet waters of Lake Hallstadt, and felt that here indeed was beauty not to be surpassed. Enough, and to spare, to satisfy the eye and head and heart of man, without perilling life and limbs to seek for other.

Long months after, seated with nothing better to look at than dull melancholy bricks and mortar, and smoke curling lazily out of chimneys, thrown out in relief by a background of leaden sky, perhaps a different argument held sway. Of earth's beauties all had passed away

save a recollection : and to make fancy vivid, I must paint the windows in the soft glowing tints of a southern evening, and imagine that beyond them lay a panorama of beauty and glory, of mountain and lake, of river and valley, of eternal snows and eternal sunshine.

Such verily there is, but afar off. So distant that it lies beyond the gray sky; beyond ethereal blue; beyond mortal vision. But it is there; waiting for every man until that day in his life, when, like Moses, each in turn goes up alone into the mountain to be seen no more.

It is something to be able to live over those recollections; to shut the eyes, and let a moving panorama of glory pass before the mind, as distinctly as if actually seen. It cannot be always summer with us—*Toujours perdrix* neither at the dinner table nor in travel. We have to come back to our brick-making: the allotted tasks, the daily work, the realities of life. Holidays, and seasons of enjoyment, the beauties of nature, and the splendours of art, are the exception for most of us. *Les jours gras* of existence.

On the whole, those few days at Gosau-Mühle

were much enjoyed. An experience of still-life, surpassed only at Nauders, a small village in the Tyrol: where ten days were spent of absolute seclusion from the world.

It was some time after leaving Gosau-Mühle and Lake Hallstadt that I found myself at Nauders. I had seen many places, and travelled about somewhat restlessly, and disobeyed the doctor's orders to a certain extent in getting tired, when one day we found ourselves at Innsbruck, undecided as to where our next step in search of the picturesque should lead us. At last we decided that we would journey to Meran and Botzen to catch a glimpse of the Dolomite mountains, and once there make up our minds where next to wander.

We started one night from Innsbruck by the diligence that carried the mails—the only time we availed ourselves of this mode of travelling. The woods as we passed them were alive and alight with myriads of fire-flies floating in the air; naught of them visible but a pale blue light, something like that of a glow-worm. In every sense of the word the scene

was enchanting. The moon, a thin bright crescent, rode gently at anchor in the unclouded sky. The forms and shadows of the mountains stood out, greater and grander than beneath the sunshine. At intervals we dashed through a sleeping village, and awoke echoes in the silence that seemed to come back upon us with reproach for breaking in upon such utter solitude. But for these villages, the only signs of life along the road, we might have been traveling through a country as yet unknown to man.

With the first glimmer of dawn, the gloom seemed to creep away and give place to a dull gray atmosphere which one felt rather than saw to be the breaking up of darkness. As it stole on by imperceptible shades, I looked back at the lights in the north. The most soft yet gorgeous tints were in the sky. Each colour of the rainbow might almost be traced, from the pale orange in the horizon to the deep purple overhead. Tones that no painter could transfer to canvas: not even Turner, with all his gorgeous imagination and colouring: putting to shame even such efforts of his genius as he threw into those marvellous sketches of Heidel-

berg, Zurich, and others. It was curious and beautiful to watch the growing light, until, though the sun could not be seen, a sudden change proclaimed that he had shot above the horizon behind the mountains.

At Imst the diligence stopped to change horses and take an extra pair. Thousands of canaries are bred in this village; and whilst we waited an army of them were singing and raving as if they had all gone mad. A little such melody went a great way. We had bargained for the whole of the diligence, but two sisters of charity came up and begged for seats: a request impossible to refuse. They were going home, to a convent at Landeck, an institution for twelve Sisters of Mercy, who go about the country nursing the sick. As they sat there, their picturesque dress seemed to make an interesting foreground to the landscape. Evidently they had not been home for some time, for as they gradually came in sight of the building, they closed their books and paused in their silent devotions, their quiet, motherly faces lighted up, and tears sprang to their eyes.

The scenery from Landeck to Nauders was grand and terrific ; the road lying amidst rocks, out of which it had been cut and blasted ; every now and then passing through short tunnels hollowed out in the stone. Thousands of feet overhead towered the rocky mountains, some jutting out and overhanging the road, as if they would crush the mites of living humanity beneath them : reminding me very much of the Pass at the entrance of the valley of Gastein : others sloping away more gradually. To the left hand, at the bottom of an almost perpendicular precipice, six hundred feet deep, ran the beautiful River Inn, rushing and leaping along with a sound all lost in the distance, and completing the wild aspect of the scene. It was a continuous ascent up to Nauders, where one at length felt very much indeed above the ordinary level of mankind. I was so knocked up with the journey that I determined, come what might, to remain here at rest for three or four days : and these prolonged themselves into ten.

To have heard of Nauders, which possesses little fame to penetrate beyond its own quiet boundaries, is almost equivalent to a confession

of having been there. It is a lovely village of some fourteen hundred inhabitants, on the very borders of Switzerland. A few minutes' walk from the inn and you find yourself on the summit of a hill, looking over into the commencement of the beautiful Engadine valley, where the air is supposed to be almost the purest in Europe. Across the valley, high up in a mountain, reposes the small village of Schling; a spot marvellously beautiful but marvellously out of the world: so elevated that no conveyance of any sort or description can reach it; nothing for it but a long climb lasting some two or three hours. Nine years ago, one cold, bright night, it was burnt to the ground; and a fine sight it must have been to see the flames rising towards heaven from the mountain side, the sky in the darkness becoming a lurid red, throwing the valley into bold relief. Rebuilt, the white, clean looking houses are now dazzling in the sunshine, and stand out here and there in the mountain, the far off beacons of a little world.

The situation of Nauders was romantic and beautiful. From the top of one of the hills,

the village looked a nest in a tree; an opal stone surrounded by emeralds. The mountains, high and varied, did not grow monotonous. Some were rocky, their irregular outlines cutting the blue sky sharply, so that it looked as a puzzle from which pieces were missing. Others were green and wooded, the lower parts cultivated into fields of corn and grain; but further up, where it was too high for vegetation, the trees had been allowed to remain: through which the soft winds sighed and sobbed with a sad, melancholy murmur; and the fiercer winds with a noise as the rush of a far-off sea, dying away like waves rippling over sands in ebb and flow. The trees stood out on the tops of the mountains, no two alike; and ever and anon a white fleecy cloud would come rolling up and quickly disappear on the opposite side, as if it was the car of an ethereal being hastening to another world on some errand of mercy.

Though surrounded by mountains, Nauders was far less shut in than Gastein. The air was wonderfully pure and bracing and yet soothing. The village inn itself was primitive beyond de-

scription, but the people were civil and obliging. The landlady, who seldom came out of her den, was a handsome, striking looking woman; so unlike the inhabitants of the village that she never could have belonged to them. There was something strange and mysterious about her; her retired mode of life; her quiet movements, so slow and dignified.

It was a matter for wonder where the fourteen hundred inhabitants of Nauders put themselves. Neither by day nor night were they visible, beyond here and there a few stray wayfarers. For the most part it bore the appearance of a deserted village, though certainly not, like sweet Auburn, the village of a plain. Scarcely a sound broke the stillness of morning, noon, or evening, save the cling-clang of the blacksmith, whose forge unluckily was pitched exactly facing the inn. A tall, lean, cadaverous looking man, this blacksmith, with a face grimy enough, but sensible and pleasant notwithstanding, and an arm that would have done honour to Hercules. . A man never at a fault for work, to judge by the unceasing blows that came down like thunder upon the anvil:

and his assistant was equally busy. For half an hour or so in the day the noise would cease, affording a prospect of a few moments' repose. Now and then a couple of small, miserable-looking oxen would be brought down to be shod; a process they seemed to look upon as a kind of martyrdom, and for the performance of which they were pent up in a frame consisting of four sliding poles, just large enough for them to squeeze into. Surely cattle so thin and wretched never were seen, though probably more the result of nature than starvation. The blacksmith with his dark trade seemed to combine the more learned one of village Esculapius, at any rate as far the cattle were concerned. Occasionally an old woman would bring down her invalid cow to be doctored, and the animal was put to such mysterious torture as would cause the place to echo with its cries and roars. When released the old woman would drive it back home, hastening its weary steps with the help of a thick stick.

The goats were in better condition: hardy and saucy. A whole regiment of them would troop past the inn between four and five

o'clock in the morning, on their way to the mountains. Each one carried a bell round its neck, so that the noise may in a faint measure be imagined. After this hour sleep was impossible; the goats out of sight and hearing, the blacksmith would begin operations for the day, and hammer away as if this was a city of the dead, and he had the task of waking it up.

The village fool here was no myth; and it was amusing to watch the mischievous antics of the poor dumb, half-witted lad. He was the butt of the people, but generally managed to retaliate upon them with interest. By chance catching sight of a stranger, he would pull off his cap and beg, though very well taken care of by his people. His appeal successful, he would spend the small coin in rolls, which were crammed into a couple of capacious pockets and devoured at leisure. Looking round cautiously to ascertain that he was not being watched, he would thrust a large piece into his mouth, and almost bolt it. His love of eating seemed insatiable, though he was evidently neither starved nor hungry. A mixture of

cunning and simplicity, he took the utmost delight in the mischief he accomplished, which was generally of a harmless nature. If a cart laden with hay passed through the village, and halted at the blacksmith's—it seemed a rendezvous for gossip in spite of work—the fool would start the animals at full speed, and then look round and run off with a knowing, sensible kind of laugh at what he had done.

To sleep one night at Nauders on the road to Meran or Botzen or the Engadine is as much as most people dream of, and the good simple folk of the village, who thought about the matter, must have been sorely puzzled by a ten days' sojourn. Now and then I perceived the blacksmith would cast a keen glance of scrutiny at his opposite neighbour, as if doubting whether he was not a political refugee, or a mauvais sujet hiding from man's wrath, whom it was his duty to give up to justice. Day after day the unsolved problem sallied forth with book or desk, to while away the hours beneath the shade of the old castle, defying the blaze of the sun in all its noon-tide fierceness. But the cool breeze coming

over the mountains helped to make the shade bearable. Millions of locusts with a whirr-whirr, like the noise of a weaver's loom, hopped about with their long legs and great green bodies: bringing to memory the description of the plague in the Book of Joel. Morning noon and night, the air was never still for them; but happily they kept to the fields, low down in the grass, and never came near the village. I caught one of them, and killed it with fumes of sulphur. Its body was about the size of a child's thumb, in shape something between a dolphin and a codfish: of a bright green that afterwards changed to brown. Its wings were a little longer than the body, green and gauzelike, most beautiful and wonderful in appearance. The body was finished off by a horny tail, sharp and piercing at the end, turning up in the form of a half crescent. The legs were about twice as long as the body, and the head was so hard and horny that a tight pinch made no impression upon it. The eyes were bright and large. On the whole, it looked formidable; one could easily imagine an army of them devastating a country and devour-

ing all vegetation. I had some trouble in poisoning it, and after deliberation dropped it into a tumbler which I covered with perforated paper. Putting some matches just blown out into another tumbler, I turned one glass upon another, and so enabled the fumes to reach the locust. In doing this no small share fell to my own lot, and the poor insect was revenged by a headache that nearly drove me into madness.

The fields were a perfect forest of wild flowers of the most brilliant hues, so that to lie down and look over them was like looking at a carpet of many colours, or a window of richly stained glass. It was very pleasant to lounge on the hill in the shade, and feast the eye upon them; to watch the haymakers working in the blazing sun, and wonder how it was possible for them to endure even five minutes of its scorching rays. How blue the skies were, even at mid-day: the sunny skies of Italy could scarcely rival them, but here you are not far from that favoured land. A short journey would quickly bring you into new scenes, a new world; the land of olive-yards and vineyards; those vineyards of the south whose beauties no

pen can describe, no tongue can utter, no brush can paint. There is nothing like them in the wide world.

At Nauders we remained ten days, and then left it for Meran, that wonderful vineyard of Southern Tyrol, whose very air seems impregnated with the luscious scents of Italy. Here we remained a day or two, revelling in such beauties of nature as scarce come to us in our dreams. But some of its impressions were put to flight one morning by alarming rumours that seemed wafted to us on the wings of the wind: rumours that war had broken out between France and Prussia: that Napoleon the Third had sent a declaration to King Frederick William: and that all those terrible scenes and movements which succeed a declaration must forthwith be looked for.

Without loss of time we drove on to Botzen, where the rumours were being whispered: first in hushed tones, as if this declaration of war could not be true, yet was an evil that to foretel might be to make happen. Then as reports grew greater and confidence increased, people spoke out more boldly, though doubting still.

The railway station at Botzen was crowded with groups hurrying northward at the first breath of suspicion. Gray faces full of solemn doubt and dread; others without relatives to lose, or prospects to be marred by the scourge, seeming indifferent to everything but their own safety; a third small minority without relatives to lose perhaps, or prospects to be marred, but full of sympathy for those on whom the scourge would fall.

A long, slow journey brought us to Innsbruck, which presented a very different scene from the quiet peaceful town we had left a fortnight before. Here the rumours were almost confirmed; there seemed to be no longer any doubt upon the point, but people thought it might be soon over. Still to be on the sure side, those who could not afford to be detained by the war, should such a state of things come to pass, were preparing for their journeys home, where they might feel at rest and in safe harbour.

Our plans were utterly upset. We had looked forward to seeing the Ammergau Passion Play; I had secured rooms and tickets before the

breaking out of the war: a fortnight longer would have found us traversing the primitive roadways of Partenkirchen and Ammergau: but the war came, not only in rumour but in reality, the actors had to go off and fight, and the play was ended. It was a disappointment. Now I would not witness it if an hour's journey would take me to the scene. It has become so universally known; has been so much written up and written about in the literature of the day and hour; all the world now flocks in so continuous a stream to the various representations, that the spirit has been taken from the play, and perhaps the simplicity from the actors: it has almost ceased to be a religious ceremony; and with the end of this there should be an end of the play also.

From Innsbruck we went to Munich, which we found in a state of indescribable confusion and consternation. One almost felt in the midst of the war. Troops marching past the hotel; bands playing, as if to raise the drooping courage, not of those on the road to battle, but of those left behind. Weeping and wailing; men and women mingling their tears; the grey hairs

of the aged, the failing eyes, seeming in one day so many years nearer the grave in their bent misery; the young torn with a grief more poignant if less sad to see; lover clasping lover in a warm, perhaps final embrace: brother and sister with lives parted for the first time, and, in so many instances, the last. The love of one's country need be no idle song or thought, no fancied passion of the heart, to bear up against such scenes; and the cause of war no mere whim or idea to justify the endless sorrow it leaves behind.

The hotels were overflowing with English, who as fast as possible were making their way back to the refuge of their own land. It was amusing to see this crowd of sightseers, their pleasures nipped in the bud, their plans rudely thwarted; in their perplexity and disappointment, wondering which route would convey them to their native shores with the least possible chance of damage to themselves. "It might be the old days over again," said they in ludicrously solemn conclave: "we might be detained prisoners for fifteen years. We have heard of such things. And what would become

of our possessions? our wives? our lares and penates?" So they talked, looking gray and gloomy, and somewhat owlish; shuddering at unknown horrors; a fancied misery, how different from the realities of the poor townsfolk surrounding them on all sides!

Many of these terror-stricken travellers could not speak one word of French or German; a misfortune that would only heighten their miseries if they had the ill-luck to be stopped on some frontier town in possession only of rude uncivilized barbarians. To add frightfully to their dilemma, no two persons attempted to give them the same advice.

One counsellor was certain the only possible way was to go right up to Hamburg, and there take ship for England. Another was equally positive the port of Hamburg was blockaded, and every one hardy enough to face its perils would have to proceed homewards minus a head. (The teeth of the listeners chattered at the suggestion, for it was a drawback worthy of consideration when you came to think of it; their nerves were already unstrung, but that was as nothing compared with a head decapi-

tated.) A third in persuasive tones advised Switzerland; to cross Lake Constance, take train to Zurich, and so on, through Neuchatel, Dijon, and Paris. A fourth, speaking with firmness unpleasantly convincing, had heard on authority infallible as the Pope's, that the only route now open was through Italy, and thence to other quarters of the world by sea. A fifth could assure his hearers—you will sympathise with the emotions of that conclave of benighted travellers—that all routes were closed; not one was practicable; a lost head, imprisonment, the tortures of an inquisition; these things awaited the adventurous.

So at Munich the agonizing changes were rung; agonizing for so many of the tourists, who perhaps for the first time in their lives, with the feelings of a mouse in the open, had ventured so far from home and their green pastures. In their trouble and perplexity, their inability to cope with the mysteries and inconveniences of an unknown tongue, they almost looked as if, should they ever reach England, it would be only as candidates for Bedlam; and mentally and openly they vowed—how many such vows like other

good resolutions get broken!—that once in England, they would never be caught out of its safe atmosphere again.

Would they, who talk and sing of the bravery and hardness of soldiers, have thought so many out of those thousands less brave for the tears in their faces that no self-control would keep in? Where tears had ceased, and grief had had its fling and worn itself quiet, there were the evidences of red and heavy eyelids to show what had been. There was no end to them as they trooped past the hotel. The stations were crowded with them. Some, unhappily, unconscious from drink: others from sleep; many lying with their heads on the hard deal tables of the waiting-rooms; others finding a softer pillow on the breast of a mother, wife, or sweetheart; a few uproarious with the beer that, combined with grief, helped to madden them: who perhaps an hour ago had wept out their good-byes to the home of childhood and youth, and now were recklessly pledging a pretty barmaid, drinking to her bright eyes and their next merry meeting. Train after train would steam out with its heavy freight—heavy in more senses than one—and

yet the crowd seemed not to diminish. It was a scene of the wildest confusion and excitement; the beginnings of war, if not of bloodshedding; the lifting of the curtain upon one of the most terrible and unrighteous tragedies of the world's history.

It was well for us that many of the places we wished to see at that time had been visited before the breaking out of war. The beauties of Ischl, that garden of the world: the banks of the Danube, and the rapids of the river that seemed to threaten to engulf the steamer as it swung down them: the gay city of Vienna, with its gorgeous opera house, and narrow noisy streets, and many churches and palaces, and enticing shops: besides other places that to know must be to love. It would be impossible to enumerate them here, or describe them: time and space fail us: and we should be carried still further beyond the boundary of our title than we have yet strayed.

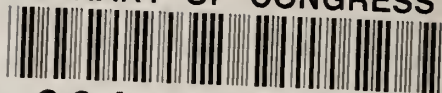
It was when we had left Gosau-Mühle, and not until then, that I felt I had indeed bid farewell to Gastein; had left it behind me, and

entered upon another world. When Ischl was reached, that favoured and fashionable capital of the Salzkammergut, and I encountered its scenes of worldly dissipation; its gay crowds and fashionable promenades; it was with feelings somewhat resembling those of a monk going back into life after long retirement.

THE END.



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